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The Nation. July 14-21, 1979 $1

EDITORIAL

BLAME IT ON OPEC

At last the President's moral equivalent of war has located the enemy—OPEC. This intelligence coup was performed by Presidential adviser Stuart Eizenstat, just prior to that memorable July 4 week of White House panic in connection with the President's canceled energy speech. Eizenstat's battle plan was simple: rally the people and relieve the Administration of all responsibility for inflation, recession and the other blights on the Presidential future by blaming everything on the oil-producing countries. Press Secretary Jody Powell faulted Eizenstat for his "silly" language; he then said OPEC was "the villain of the piece."

After showing himself to be moving quickly and with deliberation at the same time, the President retired to statesmanlike seclusion in the Catoctin Mountains. In gratitude, a conference of Democratic Governors promptly endorsed him for re-election. While Americans staged an involuntary sit-in in the gas lines down on the darkling plain, the President received a stream of energy savants, including Governor Hugh Carey, who also thinks we should "teach OPEC a lesson," thus getting his brother and fellow oil-company executives off the hook. On Tuesday (July 10) of the President's vigil, credible rumors that up to four Cabinet officers would be fired reached *The Nation*. One, two, many scapegoats. . . .

A contrast to the President's statesmanlike pace was the House's quick passage of a synthetic-fuels bill; thus the same body that refused to grasp the nettle of conservation with standby gas rationing clutched the straw of a program that will take years and cost incalculable billions. If the House showed unholy haste and the President undue procrastination, both were about five years late. No one can blame *that* on OPEC. James Schlesinger, anyone?

BAEZ LETTER
LETTERS

THE FLOATING GAS GOUGE
Fred Powledge

THE RIGHT TO FIRE
Max Gordon

THE NEO-CONSERVATIVES
Robert Lekachman

DECADENCE
Steven Aronson

BLOOD OF SPAIN
Temma Kaplan

BLACK VOTES, WHITE POWER

THE SHAM ELECTION IN RHODESIA

DAVID CAUTE

The argument between the Carter Administration and those in Congress who want to lift sanctions on Zimbabwe Rhodesia and recognize the new Government is essentially geopolitical. At its heart is neither a lust for Rhodesian chrome nor Washington's desperate concern that the country's 6.8 million inhabitants, including 225,000 whites, should enjoy a Western-style democracy virtually unsustainable in the rest of Africa. Rather, the issue is how best to combat apartheid and preserve good relations with the rest of black Africa while countering the growing Soviet influence already established in Mozambique and Angola.

The election of a Conservative Government in England has added another dimension to Washington's problem. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has abandoned the Anglo-American plan hammered out by Labor Party Foreign Secretary David Owen, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and Ambassador to the United Nations Andrew Young, which assumed that any attempt to ostracize the insurgent Patriotic Front, or to confer legitimacy on a Government that excluded it, would merely drive Patriotic Front leaders Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe into a deeper dependency on Moscow. Mrs. Thatcher's Government took no immediate action out of deference to expected condemnation of recognition by the United Nations and by the Commonwealth countries, which will be meeting in Zambia next month. But in a speech in Australia on July 1, Mrs. Thatcher said that she did not expect Parliament to renew sanctions when they

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LETTERS.

On May 30, a full-page advertisement headed "Open Letter to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam" appeared in *The New York Times* and several other major newspapers. The letter, which was signed by folk singer Joan Baez and eighty others, condemned violations of human rights in Vietnam. It set off a flurry of debate and soul-searching among veterans of the anti-Vietnam War movement. In our June 23 issue, Aryeh Neier, a member of *The Nation*'s Editorial Board, contributed an editorial, "The Baez Letter," that generally supported the open letter but also sought to answer the criticisms that had been raised against it.

Among other points, Neier argued that "proof that Vietnam tortures its citizens may be lacking, but so is proof of the falsity of the statements [by Vietnamese exiles] on which Joan Baez relied. . . . A Government that is widely known to have political prisoners and does not permit independent inquiry is not entitled to be presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt." While supporting the payment of reparations by the United States for the destruction it visited upon Vietnam during the war, Neier nonetheless contended that Vietnam's past sufferings could not justify a policy of detention and torture: "Moral absolutes may be few, but they ought to include condemnation of all torture and all imprisonment for political and religious beliefs."

We have received a number of responses to Neier's editorial. Those we have space for, plus Neier's reply to writers whose comments we invited, follow.

—The Editors

EVADING U.S. RESPONSIBILITY

New York City

Serious violations of human rights are taking place in Vietnam, especially toward the ethnic Chinese. Forced exile is an unacceptable solution to minority questions, and Vietnam's approach could set a dangerous precedent for other Asian countries. Yet the focus of the "Baez letter" (and, to a lesser extent, the Aryeh Neier editorial), by shifting responsibility for these abuses completely to Vietnam, makes it easy for us to neglect both our own violations of Vietnamese rights and, even more important, the things Americans could do to ease the situation.

Two legacies of the war in Vietnam are major food shortages and live mine fields. The United States has not provided food aid as promised in the 1973 Paris Agreements. American companies cannot trade with Vietnam because Vietnam is on the U.S. Government's "enemies list." Vietnamese are forced to look for mines with pointed bamboo sticks. Many of these mines were left behind by the United States. Wouldn't it have been more productive to have spent the advertisement's cost of $50,000-plus for food or mine detectors? Or perhaps to use some of our political energies to get the Pentagon to turn over to the Vietnamese the maps that show where we left our mines (which the Pentagon now refuses to do)?

The plight of the "boat people" was not mentioned in either the Baez letter or the Neier editorial. There are no Vietnamese in Vietnam as badly treated as they are. The boat people's situation was created in part by the United States' refusal to normalize relations with Vietnam. The U.S. failure to recognize Vietnam has strengthened the hard-line faction in the current power struggle within Vietnam, pushed Vietnam into greater dependency on the Soviet Union and increased the likelihood of additional conflict with the Chinese. The "boat people," then, are also the victims of our vindictive policy and we should make clear our willingness to accept them.

There are proposals in Congress to increase the number of Indochinese refugees that can be admitted to the United States. We should support such legislation. The Vietnamese have said that those who want to leave Vietnam could be flown directly to countries that accept them. They indicated that they have processed the papers on 10,000 such people. We should accept them . . . we could replace the dangerous journey these people take with much safer transport.

Many American groups have worked hard to maintain friendship with the Vietnamese. Food, medicine and educational supplies have been sent by groups like the Church World Service, the American Friends Service Committee and the Mennonite Central Committee (a coalition called Friendshipment, Room 302, 198 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10038, coordinates the work of several groups). More than 100 Americans representing these groups as well as Congressional delegations, press, legal groups, etc., have visited Vietnam. It does not help to get further investigations of the human rights situation in Vietnam when people like Aryeh Neier contend that the Vietnamese Government "refuses to allow any impartial investigation of allegations." If we want further study and investigation, let's give the Vietnamese credit for allowing in such diverse people as Bishop James Armstrong of the Dakotas, Paul McCleary, head of the Church World Service, Richard Dudman, bureau chief of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and Congressman Sonny Montgomery from Mississippi.

Don Luce

DISGRACEFUL DOCUMENT

New York City

The editorial apologia by Aryeh Neier regarding the vicious attack on Vietnam by Joan Baez and her associates is almost as weak and repugnant as the original Open Letter. Mr. Neier concentrates on the alleged torture of Vietnamese political prisoners and reaches the remarkable conclusion that since, he claims, neither torture nor non-torture can be proved, therefore the accusation of torture can be accepted!

Neier does not deal to any extent with the other accusations that Baez makes, such as that the "re-education centers" in Vietnam are a terrible thing. Actually, they have served a useful and intelligent purpose in retraining former enemies to become cooperative citizens in the Socialist Republic. Out of 1,400,000 former South Vietnamese military, police and administrative personnel, about 1,000,000 were freed within a week of the North Vietnamese takeover.

Of the remaining 400,000 sent to re-education camps, Wilfred Burchett, dean of English-speaking journalists in Southeast Asia, who has recently returned from eight weeks in Vietnam and Kampuchea, estimates that only 35,000 are still being held. Referring to

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EDITORIALS.

SALT with an 'L'

For the Senators who have been laying for the SALT II treaty all these long months, their knives sharpened, the long wait is over. The klieg lights are on in the high-ceilinged Senate Caucus Room, and the Foreign Relations Committee has begun its hearings. At last Senator Howard Baker Jr. can strut his hour on the national stage, hoping to make this forum the launching pad of his Presidential ambitions. Senators Baker, Sam Nunn, S.I. Hayakawa and others, who say with varying degrees of conviction that they will not vote for SALT II unless it is substantially amended, will politely portray the President as a combined dove and appeaser, whose sellout at Vienna is the worst since Roosevelt handed Poland over to the Russians at Yalta.

In the teeth of this gale-force rhetoric from the SALT II opponents, we should remind ourselves that far from being a closet peace-nik, the President has increased our arms sales abroad and our defense budget at home—and has given the go-ahead to the hugely expensive and potentially destabilizing mobile MX missile. And so as Senator Baker adds up relative megatonnages and speaks nostalgically of the good old days of the Cuban missile crisis when our superior nuclear force made the other fellow blink, the issue likely to grab the headlines is whether the buildup permitted under SALT II is enough or if an even greater one is necessary.

In view of the one-sided nature of the debate now shaping up, it is important that the terms be broadened. The American people should know that many national security and arms-control experts feel that SALT II does not go far enough in placing a cap on the arms race. That is why the amendment to the treaty recently introduced by Senator Mark Hatfield, the Oregon Republican, is useful and welcome. Senator Hatfield's amendment would halt the arms race by placing a moratorium on the development, testing and deployment of all new strategic missile systems. Unlike the other amendments being talked up, Hatfield's is not designed to scuttle the treaty. Its passage is unlikely, and the Senator's aides say that it could muster twenty-five to thirty votes in the Senate, at the outside. That is hardly enough to

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win passage, but certainly an impressive enough showing to have the desired impact on the scope of the SALT II debate.

We would like nothing better than an amendment, or a change in the guidelines to SALT III, that would prevent the deployment of the enormous first-strike arsenal now being contemplated, which, as Hatfield says, "will put a hair trigger on nuclear war." Nonetheless, we continue to support strongly the passage of the treaty that Carter and Leonid Brezhnev signed in Vienna. Its defeat in the Senate would be a disastrous blow to future Soviet-American arms-control negotiations and would return the world to a cold-war jungle of naked rivalry.

Somozan Sunset

Until Nicaragua it could generally be said of the Carter foreign policy that it had prudently, even decently, avoided the calculated (Iran) or mindless (*Mayagüez*) interventionism of its postwar predecessors. But then the United States flung itself head over heels into President Somoza's fief with spectacular clumsiness and bad timing.

It is hard to see how Carter's late rush into action through "diplomacy" could result in anything but much more trouble for the Nicaraguans and a rapid further decline in this country's ability to play a beneficent (read democratic) role in the political life of Latin America. By hesitating to break with the unspeakable Somoza when that would have meant something to "moderate" elements, and by trying to exclude from a transitional Government all but a handful of those who did the fighting and are called "radical," even when they are not, the President managed to alienate every faction.

The first result of this policy, if it can be called that, was to encourage Somoza to hang on and to continue his sickening imitation of our brutal tactics in Vietnam, complete with gunships blasting the "free fire zones" of the barrios where the poor live and now die. The next effect was to compound the difficulty of setting up any kind of interim Government that could command the support of the major groups in Nicaragua, both mass and elite. Factional bitterness flourished in the atmosphere we helped to create.

On one key point Carter and Somoza did see eye to eye, incredibly. That is that the National Guard, the dictator's private police force, palace guard and army (largely trained by the United States) must be preserved in some form. The alternative to this hated institution, in Washington's view, was power growing from the barrel of a gun held by a guerrilla who is labeled "Marxist," whatever his real politics may be. Hovering over the deliberations of the nervous men in Washington is the specter of Fidel Castro, of course. It seems useless to remind them of their own intelligence analyses showing that Castro has stayed far in the background during this whole episode, doing practically nothing to advance a revolutionary cause in his own backyard. (*The New York Times* headline on July 4 read "U.S. Study Says Cuba Plays Cautious Role in Nicaragua.")

Nicaragua's neighbors naturally have a far greater stake in a stable regime in Managua than does the United States. But Washington's covert support of this peculiarly unpleasant dictator and its fear of the political complexion of the fighting Sandinists paralyzed attempts by third parties to get rid of Somoza by concerted action. When it became clear that Somoza must go, lest the revolutionary oil slick spread throughout Central America, the United States relegated them to spectators while rushing to the head of the parade to try to lead it in a global anti-Communist direction.

This has been a more complex and sophisticated kind of interventionism than its forerunners, done for the benefit of fruit companies and banks. But it will make us no better Latin American friends in the long run, and it has added nothing at all to our national security.

Stop the Shredder

The Freedom of Information Act is under attack. In an article in *The New York Times Magazine* of June 10, Hiss-torian Allen Weinstein describes an "Open Season on 'Open Government'" (and takes a few shots himself). The most serious attack, however, comes from F.B.I. Director William Webster, who is now circulating a set of proposals (of which *The Nation* has obtained a copy) that would reform some key provisions of the act right out of existence. In Webster's words, "The proposals would divide all F.B.I. records into two categories. The first category would consist of the most sensitive information the F.B.I. posseses.... The proposals would exempt [it] from the mandatory provisions of the Act."

Meanwhile, the field office destruction program proceeds apace (see John S. Rosenberg, "The F.B.I.'s Field Files," *The Nation,* March 3, 1979), and the request to destroy headquarters' files is still pending before the Senate Judiciary Committee. The F.B.I.'s new proposal calls for a "seven year moratorium" on the release of investigative files. If they hurry, everything may be destroyed in the interim, although Director Webster does offer the assurance that "the F.B.I. will not use the moratorium in concert with a file destruction program to frustrate the Freedom of Information Act." Since that is exactly what has happened in the past, Webster's promise is not reassuring.

In an attempt to stop the destruction, *The Nation,* its editor and several of its contributors have joined with more than forty other individuals and groups in a lawsuit, filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia by the Fund for Open Information and Accountability, against the F.B.I. and the National Archives. The other plaintiffs range from the American Friends Service Committee to Angela Davis, and many are members of the Campaign for Political Rights, a national coalition of organizations working to end F.B.I. abuses. The suit seeks to enjoin further file destruction. In addition, it calls on the court to supervise the establishment of adequate safeguards to prevent undue destruction in the future.

Perhaps some reform of the Freedom of Information Act

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is needed to prevent groups like the Calorie Control Council, an association of diet food and drink processors, from hamstringing the Food and Drug Administration with what outgoing Commissioner Donald Kennedy terms "numerous harassing Freedom of Information requests." But such a need, if it exists, does not justify the sweeping request of Director Webster. We hope the court moves fast. The Justice Department refused to halt the ongoing field office destruction program pending the outcome of our case, and it would be the height of irony if our complaint became moot because the F.B.I.'s shredders moved faster than the wheels of justice.

Europe Disunited

"It's a terrible shame," lamented David Steel, leader of Britain's Liberal Party and the country's most pro-European politician, when told that 70 percent of the eligible British electorate had not voted in the European parliamentary elections held last month. Nearly eighty million potential European voters in nine European Economic Community countries either abstained or dropped blank ballots in the first election for the supranational legislature. On a continent where most national elections tally well above 80 percent of the electorate at the polls, this 50 percent turnout represents a major defeat for the forces that support the political unification of Europe.

Pro-European forces had hoped that the direct election of the European Parliament would provide a political mandate for increasing that body's powers, which up until now have been solely advisory. The European Parliament would control the Brussels Commission, the executive organ of the E.E.C., but also eventually impose a European authority over the national parliaments. Not only did half of the European voters abstain from endorsing such an ambitious conception of European unity but a significant number of those who voted backed parties that are strongly opposed to relinquishing even an inch of national sovereignty. Among the 410 members of the new assembly, at least 150 are openly hostile to supranationality.

Although in the days that followed the election most political analysts agreed that Europeans had voted "at the center," they promptly added that the political groupings represented in the European Parliament (Communists, Socialists, Christian Democrats, Liberals and Conservatives) were so heterogeneous that it was absurd to talk about a European Parliament. A more accurate description would be a collage of nine European assemblies.

The European Parliament is no melting pot. Even the forces that have traditionally been the most favorable to a united Europe face major divisions and conflicts along national lines. The Socialists and Social Democrats, which constitute the largest single group in Strasbourg, include the British Labor Party, which is so anti-E.E.C. that it flatly refused to encourage its supporters to vote in the European contest. As a result, the British working class, backbone of the Labor Party, roundly boycotted the European elections, thereby weakening the socialist representation in Strasbourg. All over Europe, the left suffered the most from the large number of abstentions. The country in which participation was the highest, Italy (85.9 percent), is also the country where the left polled the highest vote. Participation was particularly low in industrial cities such as Liverpool and Hamburg, however, indicating that the European ideal is of little moment to the European working class. The French Socialists react to proposals for increasing the powers of the European assembly with caution, for fear of offending the durable nationalistic sentiments of the greater part of the French electorate, while their brother parties in Germany, Holland, Italy and Belgium favor more supranationality in the management of the E.E.C.

The Christian Democrats, the second largest group in Strasbourg, are also divided. By tradition, they are strongly pro-European; their founding fathers, Konrad Adenauer, Robert Schuman and Alcide De Gasperi were, after all, the patriarchs of a united Europe. The Dutch, Belgian and even the Italian Christian Democrats like to portray themselves as belonging to the center-left, and emphasize the popular origin of their supporters. They profess embarrassment at being associated in the European Parliament with their brethren in the West German Christian Democratic Union-Christian Social Union coalition, which is led by ultraconservative characters of dubious democratic credentials, such as Hans-Edgard Hahn, a former Nazi ideologist known for his violent anti-Semitic pamphlets; pan-Germanist Otto von Hapsburg, grandson of Emperor Franz-Josef, and even Prince Philipp von Bismarck, a far-rightist descendant of the Iron Chancellor. Their election enhances the general European uneasiness about the recent election of Karl Carstens, a former Nazi official, to the Presidency of the German Federal Republic.

The direct European parliamentary election was designed to challenge the mammoth bureaucracy in Brussels which has tried for the last twenty-one years to shape the destiny of the E.E.C. The Strasbourg Parliament, the pro-European forces argued, could provide the Brussels technocrats with a direct contact with the public opinion of the community and, above all, an opportunity for a democratic control over the European decision-making processes. During the campaign many candidates emphasized the need for a Europe in which the topics discussed would no longer be the price of sugar beets, butter or steel but the life and problems of the 257 million Europeans. The European Parliament has not, however, received the kind of popular mandate that would help it successfully fight the nationalistic tendencies of the nine national parliaments. The low participation in the June 10 elections and the very composition of the mosaiclike assembly make it practically impossible for the Strasbourg Parliament to command enough respect and gather enough political influence to convince the national assemblies to cede portions of their sovereignty to a higher European authority.

WILLIAM J. GAILLARD

William J. Gaillard is a freelance writer currently working in Europe.

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SECOND THOUGHTS

CAREY McWILLIAMS

An obituary notice in *The New York Times* of June 28 accurately described Carleton Beals as "a native American independent." But the characterization might have been sharpened had it said that he was a native Western or California-style radical, for there is, of course, a difference between the Western and the Eastern Seaboard variety. Carleton worked his way through the University of California—his parents had moved to California when he was 3 years old—and his brother, Dr. Ralph Beals, is a distinguished California historian. Although few American journalists of his time were more widely traveled or less provincial in outlook, Carleton never ceased to be the Western radical even though he was for many years a resident of Connecticut. It was, indeed, this difference in background that set him apart from his journalistic peers in the East.

There was a time, in the 1930s, when he was widely recognized as the dean of American correspondents writing about Latin America. But as the cold war intensified, Carleton did not jump aboard the bandwagon. As a result, he failed to win the kinds of assignments for which he was uniquely qualified by expert knowledge and first-hand experience. No American correspondent, for example, knew more about Cuba than Carleton. But his radical views kept him sidelined at a time when his insights could have been most valuable. As chairman of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee he could hardly expect to be looked upon with favor by those who eagerly accepted C.I.A. briefings and the official Washington line. Moreover, he was always quite blunt and outspoken in voicing views which reflected his native American radicalism. But in no sense was he a committed Marxist or an ideological leftist.

Front-page headlines provided an appropriate if ironic backdrop to the notices of his death. Sandinists had gained the upper hand in Nicaragua. The dictator Anastasio Somoza Debayle—"Tacho" as he is known to former classmates at LaSalle Military Academy on Long Island and at West Point—was huddled in an elegant bunker waiting for the final word from Washington, with his jet plane revved up for takeoff at an instant's notice. Although his family had been trained, financed, advised and militarily supported for decades by Washington, Tacho was obviously no longer in high favor at the White House; indeed, it was evident that he was clearly marked for history's dustbin.

In a sense, therefore, it was an appropriate time for Carleton to die. His first major scoop had been his famous 1928 interview with the rebel leader Augusto Sandino in the jungles of Nicaragua. Sandino had launched a gallant revolt against the Marine Corps occupation, and it was there, in the jungles, that U.S. troops had their first experience in combatting guerrilla resistance forces under tropical conditions. The Sandino revolt had been an unreported story until Carleton induced Oswald Garrison Villard, then editor of *The Nation,* to give him $100 a week, expenses included, so that he might find his way from Honduras, partly on horseback, partly on foot, through the jungle to a rendezvous with Sandino. Carleton's stories, a major scoop for *The Nation,* were picked up by a large section of the world press and, overnight, Sandino and the struggle for independence which he represented became world-famous.

In 1960, Carleton asked me for an advance of substantially the same amount he had received from Villard so that he might visit Cuba to find out what was really going on there. He was beside himself with curiosity and deep concern, but none of his former "big-time" news connections would send him to Cuba; so he appealed to us. His first article from Cuba (July 23, 1960) reported that tensions with the United States were mounting dangerously, and a report of November 12, captioned "Cuba's Invasion Jitters," clearly foreshadowed the Bay of Pigs invasion. It should be emphasized that these reports were written by a man who knew more about Cuba than most of the working press combined.

In view of Carleton's brilliant advance work, it is not surprising that *The Nation* broke the story of the impending Bay of Pigs invasion (in an editorial of November 19, 1960, based on information supplied by Ronald Hilton of Stanford, who had just returned from a visit to Guatemala where he had learned of the C.I.A. guerrilla base at Retalhuleu). So thanks to Carleton, *The Nation* scored two major scoops.

The span of more than thirty years between the first and the second of these scoops was marked by almost unrelieved American folly and stupidity in Central America and the Caribbean. In the aftermath of the Bay of Pigs fiasco, President Kennedy moaned to Ted Sorensen: "How could I have been so stupid?" But his stupidity was willful; he had ample advance notice and warning. Later Kennedy told Turner Catledge that if *The New York Times* had printed more about the guerrilla base in Guatemala, this "colossal mistake" might have been avoided. But neither the President nor his friends at *The Times* had heeded the warnings that *The Nation* had carried, first in the stories by Carleton from Cuba and then the quite specific warning in our editorial of November 19, 1960. If *The Nation* had done nothing more than provide a home for Carleton's last great reports from Cuba and his earlier stories from Nicaragua, it would have deserved the Pulitzer Prizes which neither it nor its famous contributor received. □

Notice to Our Readers

The Nation's summer schedule will be in effect during July and August. The next issue will be dated July 28-August 4.

Our new look this week is due to our conversion to in-house typesetting. The changeover necessitated using a new typeface, known as *English Times.*

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LETTERS.

(Continued From Page 34)

the original detainees, he says: "A great investment of time and talent has been expended in winning them over to play an honorable role in building a new society. Can Joan Baez cite a name of anyone executed?"

Mr. Burchett adds: "With due homage to Joan's contribution to the Vietnamese war protest movement and her courage under U.S. bombs during her visit to Hanoi, it must said that her Open Letter reveals complete ignorance of the realities of today's Vietnam.... To the best of my knowledge all the accusations in the Joan Baez letter and their imputations are baseless."

It is amazing and depressing that no fewer than eighty-one American intellectuals, many of them of the highest standing, should have signed the Baez Open Letter. Not one of them could be rightly called an expert on Vietnam. Not one of them adequately checked the "facts" as presented by Baez, who obtained most of her information from Doan Van Toai, a Vietnamese émigré with close ties to the Thieu dictatorship and the C.I.A. The truth is that, much like *The Best and the Brightest* of David Halberstam's searing book, the Baez signatories let themselves be led like brainless sheep into the quagmire of one of the most disgraceful documents in U.S. political history. *Corliss Lamont*

BIG LIE TECHNIQUE

Washington

One would generally wish that in the aftermath of such a painful war which had cost the American people tens of thousands of lives and hundreds of billions of dollars, many American friends would have learned some of the lessons of the Vietnam experience. Now, given the nature of the Baez letter and Aryeh Neier's analysis, it is perhaps too much to expect that some friends might do so.

Instead of frankly admitting that there is not enough knowledge of facts to warrant either Baez's conclusions or Neier's, the tendency here is to listen to wild charges by two right-wing refugees who were allowed out and never were tortured by the Vietnamese Government. It's Goebbels's big lie technique that we have seen before: the bigger the lie, the harder to disprove. And, of course, the whole burden of proof is laid at the doorstep of the Vietnamese people at a time when they face immense difficulties.

The contents of the charges involved Vietnamese who supposedly signed some human rights violation statement on the Ho Chi Minh City cathedral's steps, but to the chagrin of these Vietnamese revenge seekers, nothing of the sort happened *in reality*. The Vietnamese named by the refugees as signers of the statement have denounced this fabrication, and have been busy traveling and helping rebuild their country. Names of the so-called journalists and writers on the list given to Ms. Baez actually are names of right-wing Vietnamese who used to work for Saigon newspapers which were backed by the defunct Thieu regime, his relatives and Thieu's military. They were engaged in long-term political warfare against the people of Vietnam, under the guidance of Thieu's Political Warfare Department, which at the time supervised all such "cultural" activities. Some might be in the re-education camps, but the clear intent behind the charges is not a real concern for the human rights of the Vietnamese but an attempt to bring out such types of pro-Thieu, right-wing Vietnamese and to intensify the propaganda warfare against Vietnam. The proof is that other Vietnamese of this kind who fled their country are now all busy putting out the most right-wing Vietnamese magazines against Vietnam in the United States. Ms. Baez might be interested to know that her main refugee source sits on the editorial board of a most right-wing magazine here, and recently gave an interview to a magazine called *Soldier of Fortune*. That such an alliance between some American friends and certain refugees has taken place is strange indeed; it is, however, a clear testimony that there is considerable ongoing ignorance about the situation in Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea.

The record of the Vietnamese people on this subject is generally clear, especially with regard to the reactionaries who now are and have been in re-education camps. Few critics, however, seem to be interested in looking into the actual statements and acts of the Vietnamese in this matter. Given the fact that Vietnam is facing the tremendous legacy of the war, and now the threat posed by reactionary elements from China, not to mention the shortage of food, one perhaps has to salute the Vietnamese for following their standards of human decency. The record, if I remember, of post-World War II France in dealing with collaborators was not very good, and one would wonder what a really severe shortage of gasoline in the United States would do to Aryeh Neier's "universal standards of decency." This is not to say that the Vietnamese are infallible people, because they are not. They face a difficult situation, and well-grounded criticism, dealing with precise facts, is welcome.

It appears, though, that underlying the Baez letter and the Neier analysis is an instinctive desire to attempt to cleanse the U.S. Government of its massive guilt. From my observations of the American scene in general, the more the U.S. Administration seeks to do so in the way of propaganda attacks on Vietnam, the more present is the legacy of the war. With regard to people like Ms. Baez and those supporting her, the silence might be deafening if a Vietnamese should ask what they have done in the past four years when Vietnam was ravaged by the worst floods in thirty-five years, leaving the country short of almost two million tons of food. What have they done while the U.S. Administration continues to wage a silent war of economic embargo, and in coordination with elements in the Chinese leadership tries to choke Vietnam economically and otherwise?

It is easier to say that American responsibilities terminated when the war ended officially in 1975, and that whatever has happened since in Vietnam lies with the Vietnamese. Realities, however, are quite different, and perhaps it's better to face the legacy of the war now.

The Baez letter and the sympathetic responses it provoked are certainly not the last in the current wave of smears against the Vietnamese people. Actually, there is a simple answer to all this raucousness. American friends could conduct a massive campaign calling on Jimmy Carter to normalize relations with Vietnam, and then work out arrangements for the so-called political prisoners in Vietnam to come to the United States under the sponsorship of Joan Baez and her committee. Given the record of the U.S. Government, one cannot help but wonder what the response would be. *David Truong*

(Continued on Page 40)

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AN EASY STAND

Northampton, Mass.

When I first saw the Baez letter I instinctively applauded it; later I began to have doubts. Aryeh Neier, unfortunately, reinforces them. I don't know at this moment if I would sign such a letter, but I will not sign (so to speak) his codicil to it.

I agree with everything he says up to the last two paragraphs of his statement, but at that point he exposes a political logic that I find unacceptable. To begin with, he says that the small chance that reparations will be paid the Vietnamese may be damaged by the Baez letter, but the fault lies with those who abuse human rights. . . . Really? I thought it lay, and still lies, with those who conducted one of the most murderous wars in history on the thinnest of rationales, indiscriminately killing, maiming and uprooting another people by the millions; and who now refuse to make reparation on, among other meretricious grounds, precisely the ground of the Vietnamese abuse of human rights. Am I tacitly to align myself with, and give intellectual aid and comfort to, those who, in my name and using my tax moneys, committed the original monstrous atrocity?

When I am then further told that "cruelty on the scale practiced by the Republic of Vietnam is no more susceptible to [friendly private interventions] than the depredations against Vietnam committed by the United States," I become really angry. Am I supposed to accept that absurd and offensive comparison? Why not "insensitive violations of the human rights of Arabs by the Israelis are no more susceptible to friendly private interventions than were the depredations against the Jews committed by the Nazis?" *That's* the ballpark my country was playing in a decade ago, and what it was up to can in no way be illuminated by that lovely obfuscatory word "depredations"; I almost get the feeling that, in retrospect, Aryeh Neier and I were fighting a different war then.

Finally, I think the last sentence of his comment completely misses the point. "Going public" against our own war machine meant for many people verbal and even physical abuse, harassment by the I.R.S. and the F.B.I., alienation from or even ostracism by our own body politic, amounting in some cases to a choice between prison and exile. "Going public" against the Republic of Vietnam(!) is a painless, inexpensive way of taking a stand that no one of power or substance can possibly disagree with: an intellectual's version of doing well by doing good.

The idea of keeping silent about the events in Vietnam today is profoundly troubling, and there is certainly a strong, principled argument for doing what Joan Baez and the others have done. But I will have to see a presentation of the argument that is not false to my experience of the Vietnam War; I haven't seen it. *Philip Green*

ARYEH NEIER REPLIES

New York City

Don Luce makes several good points in his response to my editorial. The banishment of the ethnic Chinese and the plight of the boat people certainly should be included in any discussion of human rights in Vietnam. The United States does bear great responsibility for what has happened to the boat people and this, as well as common decency, should make advocates of human rights press for their admission to the United States. I agree also with Luce that Vietnam's admission of some outsiders, such as those he mentions, is an encouraging sign, though it is no substitute for an impartial investigation of charges of torture.

Corliss Lamont and David Truong seem to believe that the charges of torture can be disposed of by characterizing those who make the accusations as reactionaries allied with the Thieu regime. I find this no more persuasive than statements by the Pinochet regime in Chile or Iran under the Shah dismissing those who accused them of torture as Communists. It seems quite likely that victims of torture in Chile, Iran, Vietnam or any place else would be the enemies of those in power. Proof of torture, as I wrote in my editorial, is always difficult to obtain. Even when it is as widespread as it was in Iran, it took the overthrow of the Shah to begin to document what the Savak had been doing. Yet, given known human rights abuses in Vietnam and its refusal to allow investigations, Joan Baez and the other signers of her advertisement are at least as justified in relying on allegations by antagonists of the current Government as Lamont is in relying on Wilfred Burchett, a friend of the Government, to refute their allegations.

The confinement of thousands of political prisoners in re-education camps—a mere 35,000 in the estimate Lamont quotes here, 44,000 in the advertisement Lamont and others published in the June 24 *New York Times*—seems quite proper to Lamont and Truong. According to Amnesty International's Report for 1978, those confined include "people who left Vietnam in 1954, people who have studied in or visited the United States, and writers and intellectuals thought to be antagonistic to the new socialist society. Also detained are members of former political parties, individuals classed as 'mercantile capitalists' and others regarded as belonging to the bourgeoisie." Lamont's view of their confinement is especially chilling since he cites, with evident approval, Burchett's statement that, "A great investment of time and talent has been expended" on their re-education. Is that so? Should we applaud those who spend time and talent altering the ideologies of political prisoners?

Philip Green writes with evident passion but his reasoning eludes me. He says, for example, that it is "unacceptable" for the United States to use human rights abuses in Vietnam as a pretext for not paying reparations. As my editorial made clear, I agree and I could sympathize if he focused his rage on the use of the pretext. Instead, as best I can tell, he is distressed with my apportionment of the blame for furnishing the opportunity to use this pretext on the abusers of rights rather than on those who decry abuses.

Green's comments about "going public" also miss my point. I never suggested that the signers of the Baez advertisement risked anything in denouncing the Republic of Vietnam. Nor did most of those who signed statements denouncing the American war in Vietnam. My point only concerned the possibility of stopping large-scale denials of human rights by friendly private criticisms. It doesn't work.

Aryeh Neier

DISASSOCIATION BANDWAGON

New York City

The cardinal sin of the Baez letter is its lack of proof for charges so heinous. Aryeh Neier spotlights this infirmity with respect to the charges of torture. The same defect permeates other malignant indictments.

How explain the Baez letter? We do well to plumb its historical genesis. It surfaced in the wake of the Cambodian-

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Vietnamese conflict. Vietnam was generally branded the aggressor. Many of the antiwar protesters were disillusioned with Vietnam. Vietnam had become an albatross. The disassociation bandwagon beckoned.

Although the Western press generally blamed Vietnam as the invader, not a single Western correspondent or reporter was in either Cambodia or Vietnam during the crucial battles. The dispatches emanated principally from Bangkok—hundreds of miles away. Few questioned the authoritativeness of these dispatches. To gather the facts and assess the international law implications, the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, with members throughout the world, formed a commission of jurists. I was invited to serve—probably because of my chairmanship of the Lawyers Committee on American Policy towards Vietnam. We were eight lawyers including several international law professors: two Parisians, an Italian, a Japanese, a Pole and three Americans—Prof. John H.E. Fried, Special Legal Consultant to the U.S. War Crime Tribunals at Nuremberg; Hope Stevens, President of the National Conference of Black Lawyers, and myself.

We spent thirteen days—April 24 to May 6—in Vietnam and Cambodia interviewing high-ranking Vietnamese and Cambodian officials of the military and foreign ministries and visiting the crucial battle areas. We were frankly startled to learn from the Vietnamese military authorities that it was the Pol Pot forces—who had concentrated nineteen of their twenty-two to twenty-four divisions on the Vietnamese-Cambodian border—who had invaded Vietnam in December 1978; that their crack units were crushed on Vietnamese territory; that thereafter the Vietnamese crossed into Cambodia while the anti-Pol Pot insurgents launched their drive; the Pol Pot Army disintegrated; Phnom Penh radio messages, intercepted by the Vietnamese, ordered their forces to disperse, to prepare for guerrilla warfare. Admittedly, this account comes from Vietnamese military authorities—men who directed the Vietnamese operations. But how sacred are the Bangkok dispatches?

In the light of the genocidal practices of the Pol Pot regime, humanity—particularly the sad survivors who escaped the extermination program—owes an eternal debt of gratitude to the Vietnamese for their role in the fall of that murderous regime.

I saw—with my own eyes—the torture chambers in what had been the Tuol Bleng High School in the outlying districts of Phnom Penh. I saw the chamber housing the electrical equipment used; the iron beds to which the victims were chained; the tufts of hair on the floor, hair plucked from the victims' scalps; the blood-stained floors; the typewriters to grind out the "confessions"; the hammers, knives and axes used; the lists, handwritten, of the victims, their professions or occupations, the dates of death—methodically maintained, Nazi-like. That is *proof* of torture. What proof of torture alleged to have been committed by the Vietnamese do the Baez signatories offer? So heinous a charge should not be blithely penned. And particularly in the case of a people who despite twenty years of the most bloody, savage cruelties practiced by the Saigon regime—remember the tiger cages?—did not execute a single subject of that regime. Is this a people to be branded as torturers?

Would Joan Baez and the others have issued their letter if they were aware of all this? *Joseph H. Crown*

BARTERING LIVES

N. Little Rock, Ark.

Aryeh Neier's editorial on Joan Baez and the Vietnamese was awful. Anybody who can use the word "Socialist" when he's talking about totalitarian societies has to be nuts. And all those paragraphs with on-the-one-hand-this-and-on-the-other-hand-that crap! . . .

This is what you should have done: Admit it was a mistake to sympathize with a regime that, at the very least, barters in human lives, like the Nazis did when they got greedy. . . . *Bud E. Miles*

CHINESE SCHOOL

Brookline, Mass.

Aryeh Neier has not one word to say about the Chinese role with respect to Vietnam. One need not be an Asian scholar to know of the sharp differences between Vietnam and China during the war, with the latter insisting that Vietnam must break with the Soviet Union. This is the China that supports racism in Africa, approved of Pakistan's butchery in Bangladesh, has close relations with fascist Chile and aided and abetted the Pol Pot raids in Southern Vietnam and the extermination and maiming of as many as two million persons in Kampuchea. This is the China whose leaders preach the inevitability of World War III, denounce SALT, call for the expansion of NATO and scorn any participation in efforts toward disarmament.

Ms. Baez and Mr. Neier apparently have joined the Chinese school whose motto is "transform the victim into the aggressor." . . . *Elmer O. Fehlhaber*

BLOOD-BATH THEME

Hempstead, N.Y.

Aryeh Neier's analysis of the "Baez letter" shuns the most dispositive question: who is responsible for the ongoing strife in Southeast Asia? An unequivocal answer is to be found in the fact that the United States, through its client regime in Thailand, has armed and incited against Vietnam the remnants of Pol Pot's genocidal army together with the rightist forces in Laos.

Furthermore, it is highly doubtful that Peking would have embarked upon its "punishment" of Vietnam without promises of reward and favor from Washington. . . . Mr. Neier disingenuously repeats that whatever difficulties befall Vietnam as a result of the Baez statement are the fault of the Vietnamese Government and not of its critics. Here not only does he begin to assume that which has yet to be proved about the allegations against Vietnam but his argument falsely implies that *only* if Vietnam has acted wrongfully will it be sanctioned by enlightened Western opinion.

This line of reasoning ignores the fact that in the eyes of the American Government and media, Vietnam's worst crime was to abolish capitalism and that what is needed to justify the continued economic and military isolation of Vietnam are precisely the kinds of propaganda canards that the Baez statement provides.

If Hanoi's status were really dependent upon its guilt or innocence in the human rights department, why then, in Mr. Neier's words, was there such a "small chance" that reparations would have ever been paid to Vietnam in the first place? It is apparent that in Mr. Neier's closing remarks he drops all pretense of objectivity on the issue of proof and finds Vietnam guilty as charged long before the prosecution has even finished presenting its case!

It looks like the old "blood-bath" theme is finally getting a new coat of paint! *Geoff Wright*

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ARTICLES.

TAKING THE BOSS TO COURT

Can Businesses Fire at Will?

MAX GORDON

Has the time come to challenge the right of a private employer to fire employees "at will"? The right to dismiss, even when performance on the job is not involved, has hitherto been claimed under the common law. It has been narrowed, to be sure, by laws prohibiting dismissal for reasons of color, race, religion, sex or efforts to organize, and unionized workers have some degree of job protection. But these restrictions aside, employers have generally been conceded the property prerogative of getting rid of workers for any reason or no reason. Such a prerogative in a democratic system raises the issue of whether business, through its control of people's livelihoods, should be permitted to negate or restrict their freedom to engage in speech and political action. As Yale political scientist and economist Charles E. Lindblom wrote in his recently published *Politics and Markets,* the private corporation "fits oddly into democratic theory. . . ."

In the April issue of *Civil Liberties Review,* the American Civil Liberties Union publication, Director Ira Glasser tells why the A.C.L.U. had turned down the case of an employee fired by his boss because he had been active in the campaign to impeach Richard Nixon. There is no law, Glasser explains, that limits the discretion of private employers to fire employees because of their politics. The Constitution, with its Bill of Rights, protects citizens from government interference with their political freedom, including protection against dismissal from public employment (Glasser neglects to say that this protection has proved far from absolute). But to prevent private employers from abridging their employees' rights, it is necessary to press for legislation, as it was in the case of the various antidiscrimination laws.

Thus, Glasser declares, the A.C.L.U. will push for legislation that forbids dismissals in private industry for speech or political activity unrelated to job performance, but it will not undertake to defend the victims of such dismissals in court. The effort to win such legislation "promises to be a difficult and exciting fight but one that has the potential of extending political rights to millions of Americans who now have to be careful about what they say."

Max Gordon co-edits Rights, *the journal of the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee, and edits* Viewpoint, *a political newsletter.*

Here Glasser is plainly opening up a major new area of freedom in America. From the very beginning, our history has been marked by the classic tension between the rights of property and those of the person. The most dramatic and explicit example was the struggle over slavery. More recently, the autocratic power of property has been progressively nibbled away through concessions extracted from its holders, such as minimum wages and maximum hours, prohibition of child labor, protection of the right to organize and strike, required safety and health measures and the bans on various forms of discrimination. To date, however, the common law right to dismiss at will has held fast.

Is the A.C.L.U. correct in excluding legal action from its proposed campaign to challenge this right? A year ago, a dissenting justice of Pennsylvania's highest court forcefully assailed the "outmoded doctrine" of employers' "absolute right of discharge" and called upon the courts to recognize a dismissed employee's right to sue where he or she considered the dismissal "wrongful." The justice argued that unions were created to "countervail employers' dismissal power" and that unorganized workers needed court protection from "arbitrary and retaliatory discharges." The case before him did not involve political or free speech rights. A salesman was fired by the U.S. Steel Corporation because he had called his superiors' attention to dangerous defects in a pipe he was required to sell; the pipe was later withdrawn from the market but the salesman was out of a job. The state's Supreme Court upheld by a 4-to-3 vote a lower court's dismissal of his suit for damages.

Although political rights were not involved, the heart of the case was the issue of the right to fire at will. That three of the seven judges of the high court refused to recognize such a right suggests that it is no longer unassailable. Even the majority opinion noted, significantly, that:

> We have become a nation of employees. We are dependent upon others for our means of livelihood, and most of our people have become completely dependent upon wages. If they lose their jobs they lose every resource, except for the relief supplied by the various forms of Social Security. Such dependence of the mass of people upon others for all of their income is something new in the world. For our generation, the substance of life is in another man's hands.
>
> Against the background of these changes, the broad question to which appellant invites our attention is whether the time has come to impose judicial restriction on an employer's power of discharge.

But the judges argued, in part, that the courts would be overburdened if everyone discharged from a job were to be able to sue, and that proof in such cases would provide "a thorny problem." The dissenting opinion cited a couple of cases, also nonpolitical, in which courts had rejected an employer's claim of the right to discharge at will. An Indiana court had ruled in favor of a worker fired for filing a workmen's compensation claim. A California court had upheld an employee dismissed for refusing to commit perjury. In a decision not cited in the Pennsylvania opinion, a woman dismissed for refusal to "date" won her suit.

A more relevant, and probably more decisive, case involving political rights is now before the New York State Court

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of Appeals. It is being pressed as landmark litigation by attorneys for the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee. (N.E.C.L.C. arose out of the needs of the McCarthy era; its chairperson is Corliss Lamont and its general counsel, Leonard B. Boudin.) The case involves Ronald Chin, an employee of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, who was fired two weeks after attending a May Day demonstration in 1976. Promoted to a supervisory position a year earlier, he no longer had union protection. The common law in New York and in most other states provides, in the language of an 1884 state court decision, that an employee can be dismissed "for good cause, for no cause or even for cause morally wrong." On this basis, the lower courts upheld A.T.&T.'s right to dismiss Chin. His lawyer, Michael Krinsky, a member of Boudin's firm, is appealing on the explicit ground that such absolute power in the hands of an employer deprives a worker of his constitutional rights; freedom of speech is diminished if its exercise causes an employee to lose his or her job.

In his brief, Krinsky makes the interesting point that for hundreds of years English common law, generally accepted in the United States until the late nineteenth century, provided that workers could not be dismissed for a year after being hired; beyond that they could be fired at will. But the labor strife of the late nineteenth century led the courts to abrogate this common-law right in order to strengthen the position of the corporations in combatting rebellious workers.

In the Chin case, A.T.&T. initially maintained that the issue of dismissal at will was not applicable here because, the company charged, Chin had been arrested for attacking police at the demonstration. But this pose was soon dropped. "Public policy in our free enterprise system," the company declared flatly, "has never been defined to require a private employer to pay and support an individual who advocates a position inimical to the best interests of the employer or disfavored by it."

Here, of course, is the core of the matter. Workers are not free to speak up or to engage in political action "disfavored" by the boss. The A.T.&T. argument enlarges on this by asserting that an employee without contractual or union protection "may be terminated at any time by either party for any reason or no reason."

A.T.&T.'s Code of Conduct declares, among other things: "Remember that there are organizations whose activities are directed towards undermining or destroying the United States Government. Participation by employees in this type of activity will not be tolerated. If you are approached with an invitation of membership in such an organization, notify your supervisor immediately." An earlier edition of the code included the Attorney General's list of progressive and radical—in McCarthyite terms, "subversive"—organizations for ready reference. A.T.&T. monitors and evaluates the organizations to which its employees belong outside their jobs, and asks them to act as informers against fellow employees.

Other corporations impose similar political criteria for

DRAWINGS BY MORT GERBERG

employment, relics of the cold-war days. Texaco and Exxon, for instance, still require prospective employees to sign oaths denying membership in the Communist Party or any other Communist group, or in any organization advocating the overthrow of the Government—a definition that depends on the political outlook of those empowered to do the defining. Thus have the loyalty oaths of the McCarthy era become institutionalized and woven into the fabric of our society.

But corporations are by no means monolithic on this point. A little more than a year ago, an American Assembly on Corporate Governance, attended by several high-level business executives, debated employees' rights, including civil rights. One executive urged adoption of a formal bill of rights for workers in private enterprise. This is scarcely the way in which such rights will be gained throughout the industry, but it does suggest that the issue is on the agenda.

It may well be that the New York courts, like those in other states, will continue to insist that the law as it now stands does empower private employers to fire at will. Yet even this does not justify the A.C.L.U. in its rejection of litigation. At the moment, one cannot discern much of a constituency in support of bringing the issue before Congress. Court cases can both dramatize the problem and focus public attention on the deficiency in the law, about which Ira Glasser properly complains. It is not unknown in our history that legislatures have been moved to revise laws when the courts have pointed up their shortcomings. Both the dissenting and majority opinions of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in the U.S. Steel Company employee case show that the courts are coming to recognize that curbing private enterprise's power to fire employees at will is an idea whose time has come. □

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THE FLOATING GOUGE

On the Road with A Gas-Line Victim

FRED POWLEDGE

Medicine Bow River, Wyo.

I know the precise moment when I became a victim of the energy crisis. It happened late in May in a large, off-brand gasoline station in one of the suburbs east of Los Angeles.

In defiance of the President's wishes, I had driven 3,795 miles in my Volkswagen bus from New York City down through Memphis, uppermost Texas, Santa Fe and Phoenix, then up a little and across the deserts and into L.A. The purpose of my trip was business, and public transportation would not take me where I needed to go. Nor is there enough money to fly, rent cars and stay in $28-a-night motels. On most nights I sleep very comfortably and without charge in the bus, which I've converted into a camper.

All across the country, and especially as the weekends drew near, I had been fearing the sort of crisis I had heard about: the closed gas stations, the exhausted allotments, the buck-a-gallon gasoline. Prices were certainly high—in the 80s most places except Texas, where much of the cartel is headquartered and where prices were much lower; higher as I approached California—but I didn't see an abnormally closed station until I hit Phoenix. Even then the stuff was available if you looked around a bit.

And then, on that afternoon in May, I pushed my way through an evil mixture of smog and dust storm into that suburb east of Los Angeles, and I left the interstate in search of gas. The tank was a quarter full. And it appeared that only one gas station, a Texaco, was open.

I got into the line. After I had moved forward two car lengths, a process that took perhaps eight minutes, the operator walked over and told me, with what I was pretty sure was a touch of pleasure, that the station was closing after it had served the fellow ahead of me. I could feel the panic setting in. Nothing very dramatic, just a combination of emotional and physical feelings that meant panic.

I drove slowly down the boulevard, looking for a cheap place to spend the night. The trick, my California friends had told me, was to get your gasoline first thing in the morning, and that was what I'd have to do. And then I saw the other station. It was open and pumping. I pulled in, warily because of what had happened minutes before. I rolled down the window and asked the operator if it were true that his station was open. "Sure it is," he said with a big grin.

"No catches?" I asked.

"No catches," he said. "Take all you want until it's gone."

I filled the tank and cracked a few jokes as I paid him and pulled out of the station. I glanced at the fuel gauge and saw the needle all the way over on the right, and it made me feel good. The sensation, I am embarrassed to admit, was almost utter joy; it was close to the cliché about a "new lease on life." A replenishment of my mobility was what it was. I realized that now I could go another 200 or so miles; that I was not going to be forced by an empty fuel tank to spend the night in this dreary neighborhood of chain restaurants and tract housing and silent, empty gasoline stations. Santa Monica and the Pacific lay twenty, thirty miles to the west. I could stay there, instead; see the sun dip into the ocean, walk along the beach. That gas gauge said I had my mobility back, my freedom.

As I eased back onto the freeway that would take me there, I realized that I had never noticed what that tank of gasoline had cost. And I always pay attention to such matters. Such had been the nature of my panic that I had been grateful, eager for any gasoline at all—and at any price per gallon. And that, I think, is when I became a victim of the energy crisis. I had willingly participated in the gouge that the oil companies, with the gracious assistance of the Federal Government, started inflicting on the public in late winter, inflicting with all the cleverness and confidence of a successful advertising campaign. It is a gouge that will continue through the summer until there are no motorists left in the nation who are willing to complain about the cost of fuel, or who even dare to notice it.

* * *

More time and 1,639 more miles have passed since my initiation, and I'm headed back toward New York, where the gouge is in full swing, with randomly closed stations, strange pumping hours, mile-long lines, rampant and unchallenged illegalities, incompetent governmental leadership and all the other prerequisites for panic and eventual compliance. New York is adding its own, traditional flavor to the thing by becoming the national capital of gasoline crime and greed. The standard crooks are using marine bilge pumps to extract fuel from other people's tanks; some merchants are charging an arm and a leg for locking gas caps, and other hustlers are parading past motorists lined up for fuel, offering at five bucks a gallon stolen gasoline that they transport in cans loaded on stolen supermarket food carts. Enforcement is nonexistent, as usual, but the percentage of phony press conferences and photo opportunities for attorneys general and similar publicity hunters is high.

At the moment, however, I am waiting out a weekend alongside a nice river where the antelope come to drink and feed in the early morning. It is hard to think about internal combustion, but that is how I'm going to get home, so I've had to codify a few of my thoughts about the gouge.

One of the them is that it quite obviously is a geographically *floating* gouge, engineered by the oil industry, almost certainly with the collaboration of the Federal Government through its Department of Energy and most likely with the help of the Department of Justice. The managers of the U.S. cartel and their underlings in Washington know very well how to create panic among motorists, and they have

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been using it at selected spots around the nation—first California, then the District of Columbia, then New York and New England—to soften everybody up. To get us to the point where we'll give up anything, in dollars and in governmental control, just to get the freedom that goes with a full tank of gas.

Another is that the media seem to be doing one of their more rotten jobs of covering this mess. Why, I don't know. I suspect it's because they're afraid of the answers they might find, and because they, like Washington, are terrified of the oil industry.

Another is that the gasoline crisis is a textbook example of blaming the victim. "America's love affair with the car," the politicians and commentators say (and one night in Oklahoma I fiddled with the shortwave and pulled in some snot on the BBC saying it, too), as if we had any alternative. The politicians built the interstate system to satisfy the highway lobby (and, in a burst of absurdity that could come only from Washington, claimed it had something to do with civil defense). Nobody ever disputed the argument that as General Motors went, so went the nation. Our alleged leaders have shown about as much interest in mass rapid transit as they have in bikeways (which still consist almost exclusively of green symbol-signs stuck along streets that are otherwise unchanged). The Government's main subway project at the moment calls for spending $30 billion to move MX missiles around at night. Amtrak, which could provide solutions to many of our energy/transportation problems, is fast becoming a rail version of the U.S. Postal Service. And yet the public is now being blamed and punished and threatened by its government for living in a style which that very government has created and endorsed, and to which that government has offered no alternatives.

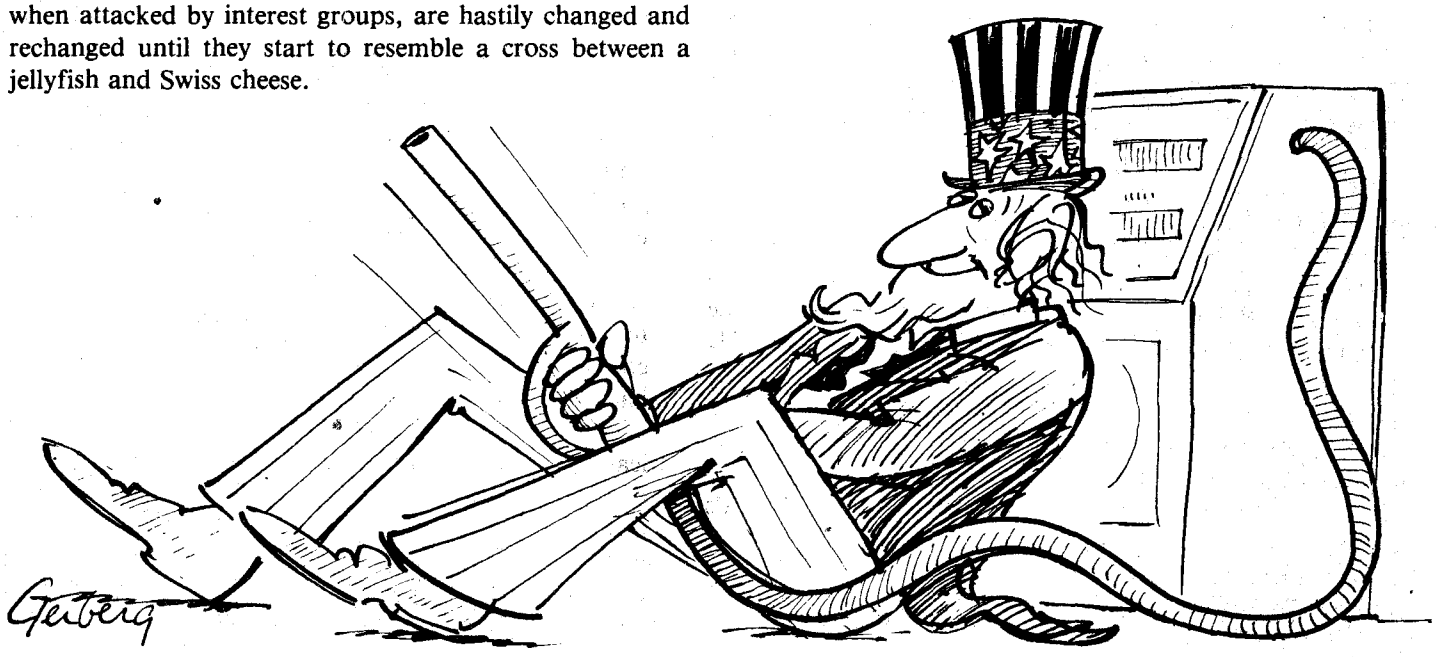
The greedy oil industry is a major culprit, of course, but an even harsher sentence should be imposed on the Administration in Washington, which not only has provided us with no real plan for coping with energy but has rather given us unreal ones that are idiotic in the extreme—and then, when attacked by interest groups, are hastily changed and rechanged until they start to resemble a cross between a jellyfish and Swiss cheese.

Conservation, in tandem with development of alternate forms of energy, is an obvious direction to take. But the Government apparently doesn't know that. The motorist who has responded to the current crisis by voluntarily driving less—and there are many of them—has received no benefits at all, other than having to shell out less for gas. Rather, he or she can easily witness, at the nearest gas station, those who *don't* conserve taking literally all the available gasoline.

President Carter started off back in the early spring telling us everything would be all right if we drove thirteen fewer miles per week. Then, with that great capacity politicans seem to have these days for ignoring patently obvious symbols, Carter burned a lot of fuel in public appearances (one of them in California) and in getting away for the weekend. It is hard to believe this is the same guy who walked down the street at his inaugural. Carter has now moved from pouting at Congress's refusal to endorse his embarrassingly shoddy rationing plan to doing nothing at all to letting his flacks tell him to blame it all on the Arabs.

Carter's Department of Energy has emerged as just another component of the oil industry—another Government agency that despises the population and that, like its brethren in the fields of aviation and atomic power, seems committed to incompetence so extreme that one must wonder if it is deliberate.

Out in this part of the country, where people depend on their cars and trucks a lot—they must depend on them, for there are no alternatives—there seems to be a lot of feeling that Carter's mishandling of the situation may cost him his job. In a way, this is unfair and another example of faulting the victim: Carter's not to blame for dwindling fossil fuels, or the domestic oil cartel's conspiring to raise the price of a gallon of gasoline in America from around 60 cents to at least $1.50 in less than a year. But Carter certainly should be blamed for his inability or unwillingness to cope with the problem, and maybe he should be turned out of office for it.



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If he rolls over and plays dead on this one, what'll he do if someone even meaner than Exxon and Gulf starts bullying us? If Castro talked tough would our President surrender Florida to him?

In such a profound vacuum, there is much opportunity for leadership. So far, none of it has come from the ranks of the victims (or any place else, for that matter), but perhaps now is the time. I've been running against headwinds in recent days, and in a VW bus that means you have plenty of time for scenery and thought and reflection, and I've been meditating on what the truckers are saying on the C.B. radio. Because of their boycotts, strikes and miscellaneous shootings that grew out of the gouge that's going on in diesel fuel, the Government has made concessions to them.

What the rest of us victims need is a man on a white horse, or a woman in a Mustang, or whatever, to lead us in a bit of consumer protest—to get the attention of the gougers down in Houston and of the President and perhaps to give him a guts transplant. I suggest, for starters, that we all take Carter's original advice and drive thirteen fewer miles a week—but that we organize a campaign so that everybody abstains on the same day. A Monday might be nice, but Tuesday's fine, too. We could stay home, or maybe all park around the gas stations, and let them wonder for a day—a week would be even better—what to do with their $1.50-a-gallon gasoline. And let the Administration wonder what to do about our, not to mention its, future. □

Rhodesia

(Continued From Front Cover)

expire in November. As for the Commonwealth nations, her Government would attempt to persuade them to "come along with us."

The apparent success of the April elections, in which 64 percent of a theoretical electorate (no actual registration of voters was possible) turned out to cast 67 percent of its votes for Bishop Muzorewa, added an ostensible moral weight to the new Government's claim for admission into the community of nations. Jubilant Rhodesians, white and black, did not hesitate to remind visiting American journalists and observers that in the most recent Congressional elections in the United States, the turnout was under 40 percent, even without a civil war. Yet there are historical considerations that undermine this claim to recognition.

To understand the moral complexity of the problem one must go back to the early 1960s. Prime Minister Harold Macmillan recognized the "winds of change" and embarked on rapid decolonization. The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was broken up into its three constituent parts; two parts, Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and Nyasaland (now Malawi) were granted independence on the basis of black majority rule. But in Southern Rhodesia a white settler regime, which had enjoyed quasi autonomy from Britain since 1923, refused to compromise, offered blacks a discriminatory franchise based on high property and educational qualifications, and countered mounting black nationalism by banning the black parties and interning their leaders without trial. In 1965 Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front kicked over the traces and declared Rhodesia to be an independent state, in which blacks were underrepresented in the House of Assembly, strictly segregated and denied economic opportunities. Africans, including university graduates, were by and large excluded from the senior ranks of the civil service; likewise blacks found it almost impossible to penetrate the avenues of industrial apprenticeship. Half of Rhodesia's available agricultural land, including the most fertile regions, was reserved for whites while 650,000 African peasant farmers were cooped in the dust bowls and arid lowlands of the tribal trust lands.

Smith proclaimed his regime to be the custodian of "Western" values while resorting, in the South African style, to censorship, emergency powers, detention without trial, secret hangings. Government censors were installed in the offices of *The Rhodesia Herald* and the editor was forbidden to leave blank spaces where stories had been mutilated or banned. Joshua Nkomo, Ndabiningi Sithole, Robert Mugabe and some 2,000 other nationalist militants passed ten or fifteen years of their lives in detention under gruesome conditions.

So the war began. It was inevitable. White Rhodesians habitually denounce "external nationalists" who impose their will "through the barrel of a gun." But that, of course, is exactly what Charles de Gaulle did, once France had been overrun by invading Nazi armies. Violence begins when the man places his heel on your neck, not when you try to bite his ankle.

In 1972 a hitherto nonpolitical figure, the Methodist Bishop Abel Muzorewa, was invited by the imprisoned nationalist leaders to orchestrate popular resistance to the Ian Smith-Lord Home proposals, which were designed to lead to majority rule in a remote and unascertainable future. He succeeded very well: the Pearce Commission returned to London with the news that the overwhelming majority of blacks rejected the proposals. Having tasted popularity, the Bishop declined to retire to his pulpit: to the longstanding rivalry between the Zimbabwe African People's Union (led by Nkomo) and the Zimbabwe African National Union (led by Sithole and Mugabe) was thus added a third major aspirant to the supreme power which all these leaders craved.

Smith maneuvered, bargained, intrigued with each group in turn, hoping always to divide and rule. Nkomo went over the border to build a guerrilla force in Zambia. In Mozambique (which gained its independence from Portugal in 1975) the ZANU leadership ousted Sithole and brought Mugabe to the fore, first as Secretary General, more recently as President. The guerrilla war mounted in intensity. White farmers were ambushed, homesteads were burned, dirt tracks were mined and all white men under the age of

David Caute, author of The Great Fear *(Simon and Schuster), recently returned from a trip to Zimbabwe Rhodesia.*

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38 (now raised to 50) found themselves spending half of every year fighting in the bush.

The war and economic sanctions combined to hobble Rhodesia's economy and force Smith to accept Henry Kissinger's formula of "majority rule." The ensuing fiasco of the Geneva Conference in December 1976 proved that the Rhodesian Front remained determined to cling to substantive white power—above all, control of the security forces. The newly born Patriotic Front, consisting of Nkomo's ZAPU and Mugabe's ZANU, demanded total control of the army and police. Smith then turned that oblique eye of his toward Muzorewa, who lacked guerrilla units of his own, and the vastly embittered Ndabiningi Sithole, now stripped not only of his titles but also of his constituency. In December 1977 Smith entered into fateful negotiations with these two and his own favorite puppet politician, Chief Jeremiah Chirau. Within three months Smith had succeeded brilliantly in his purpose of transforming a stark white-black confrontation into an internecine civil war. On March 3, 1978, Smith, Muzorewa, Sithole and Chirau sat shoulder to shoulder and signed the Salisbury Agreement, launching a black-white Transitional Government of which they constituted the Executive Council.*

It was impossible for Mugabe and Nkomo to accept the Salisbury Agreement and to enter the electoral contest within its framework because of its inordinate concessions to colonial white power. That left Muzorewa, Sithole and Chirau to reap the harvest of the war of liberation but only with thoughts of squeezing into power, under Smith's wing, before the Patriotic Front got there. The concessions they gave in the process made the Transitional Government resemble the French collaborationist regime in Vichy in World War II, and preserved white power. Muzorewa and Sithole announced that they would now call in *their* boys from the bush: Nothing more to fight for or die for, fellas, we've won. It didn't happen. Here and there guerrilla units may have come "on-sides" (to use Lieut. Gen. Peter Walls's phrase), thus to be dignified officially with the title "auxiliaries," but on balance the number of Patriotic Front guerrillas fighting inside the country rose during 1978 to the present estimated figure of 12,000.

In the normal course of decolonization, Zimbabwe's black leaders would have reaped their inheritance fifteen years ago. What has made Rhodesia a unique case is the political power accorded in 1923 to the white settlers by London. In virtually every case since World War II, the decision to abandon counterinsurgency and grant majority rule has ultimately been taken by detached political elites in the great European capitals: London, Paris, Brussels, Lisbon. The liberation forces (the Mau Mau in Kenya, the F.L.N. in Algeria, the FRELIMO in Mozambique, the M.P.L.A. in Angola) never won their wars in strictly military terms, they merely raised the political price to unacceptable high levels. European mothers will send their sons out to these remote, malaria-infested backwoods of empire for only so long; white settler mothers, by contrast, will bury at least one son before their nerve cracks.

Rhodesia and South Africa are the only white-dominated states in Africa whose ultimate political and constitutional power resides within their own borders: it is no coincidence that they are the last to succumb to decolonization. Rhodesia's part-time territorial soldiers and policemen, Rhodesia's white farmers, businessmen and railway engineers, have proudly earned for themselves a reputation for military flair and panache equalled only by the Israelis'. But whereas Israel dare not conscript local Arabs into her forces, Rhodesia, like all the other white regimes in Africa, has experienced no difficulty in paying blacks to kill their own brethren. How proud the Rhodesians are of their black units; how feared and despised these black quislings are by the local populations.

The election held April 17-21 was simply the latest chapter in the continuing story of white domination, with a denouement contrived by that wily artificer Ian Smith. As a contest between parties—Muzorewa's United African National Council, Sithole's ZANU, Chirau's Zimbabwe United People's Organization, Kayisa Ndiweni's United National Federal Party—it was scrupulously conducted, even allowing for instances of intimidation by armed auxiliaries loyal either to the Bishop or to Sithole. But what induced white Rhodesians to invest unprecedented effort and expertise in staging the election throughout a war-ravaged countryside was the intense, indeed desperate, desire to prove to the West that the majority of blacks endorsed the new Constitution and rejected the war conducted by the Patriotic Front. The Rhodesian election, then, can best be understood as a disguised referendum.

"Dear Citizen," wrote Malcolm Thompson, the Ulsterman who chaired the Election Directorate, in a letter circulated to white farmers and employers. "A high percentage poll is the most effective way of proving to the Western world that we have majority support for the internal settlement. In this way, we have the best opportunity of achieving recognition and lifting sanctions, which must be the aim of all Rhodesians." Must it? Even the small white liberal party, the National Unifying Force, disagreed, urging its supporters to boycott a constitutional arrangement which excluded the Patriotic Front. "All white Rhodesians," wrote Thompson, "can assist immeasurably by helping their black employees to understand the election procedures . . . and, where possible, actually going to the polls with them."

The Election Directorate, confined exclusively to whites, depicted itself as a nonpolitical organ of the civil service, dedicated only to protecting the population's democratic rights against the threat of terrorism. The Patriotic Front, according to the directorate, had every opportunity to par-

*To appreciate the enormity of the Salisbury Agreement we need not pretend that Nkomo and Mugabe are dedicated democrats whose overriding passion is to submit to the will of the people as expressed through the ballot box. Mugabe, indeed, openly espouses a one-party state and makes no secret of the fact that any election won by ZANU would be Zimbabwe's last. Nkomo is less explicit (about everything), but must realize that his popular support is now mainly confined to Matabeleland in the West. (It is my hunch, incidentally, that in a genuinely free election held today, Mugabe would pick up about 35 percent of the popular vote, Nkomo about 20 percent, Muzorewa about 35 percent, others 10 percent. By that reckoning, the Patriotic Front, provided it held together, could command a majority.)

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regime after another. The cruelty, violence, and oppression practiced by our own government during its 20-year "presence" in Vietnam would be hard for the current Vietnamese government to match.

2 Torture

The casual lumping together of arrest and detention with torture is the sort of irresponsible charge that respected human rights organizations such as Amnesty International avoid, unless they have conclusive evidence. *Amnesty International's 1977 and 1978 reports on Vietnam do not list a single verified incident of torture.* The original draft of the "Open Letter," which was used to convince the long list of signers to endorse the ad publicly, charged that "hundreds of thousands" were being tortured. Why was this figure changed to the "thousands" which appears in the published version?

3 Prisoners

This estimate of the number of prisoners was offered to the *Washington Post* (Dec. 20, 1978) by the U.S. State Department—hardly the "independent observer" cited in the "Open Letter." The claims of some refugees that the figure is many times higher are not considered reliable by Amnesty International.

Toai's most dramatic charges stem from two 1977 manifestos on human rights" which he says he smuggled out of Vietnam. One manifesto, reportedly signed by 49 prisoners, is a scathing indictment of conditions in Vietnam's prisons. The other, which Toai says led to the arrest of the eight prominent residents of Saigon who wrote it, condemns the policies of the government in the society at large. Toai claims to have recalled from memory the long text of the manifestos and the names of the 57 signers—after having lost the original copies.

But are these manifestos real? Two of the eight people Toai claims were imprisoned for writing the second manifesto actually had nothing to do with it and have *not* been imprisoned by the current government. Professor Ton That Duong Ky, former Vice-President of the National Liberation Front, was visited at his Saigon home by a British man last August. Professor Ky was amused at the false stories of his arrest, and denounced Toai as a liar, and Toai's manifesto as a fake. Professor Pham Bieu Tam, another of the men who Toai claims wrote "every day that passes is one more day of torture and suffering for millions of Vietnamese," is currently (June 1979) leading a delegation of 15 Vietnamese intellectuals on a friendly tour of the Soviet Union.

Toai's own record also makes his testimony suspect. In 1970 and 1971, Toai toured the United States. Although he claimed to represent the Saigon Student Union, he opposed a cut-off of U.S. military aid to the Thieu regime. In fact, the president of the Student Union told American peace activists at the time that Toai actually represented a dummy student union organized by the Thieu government.

1977—to provide emergency food aid which could help relieve this crisis.

6 Mines

Every Vietnamese peasant is a human mine detector, but not because of the Vietnamese government's cruelty. The U.S. left a legacy of hundreds of millions of pounds of unexploded ordnance strewn across the country's rice paddies. Post-war visitors have witnessed accidental detonations, and have photographed some of the many daily victims who have lost feet, hands, and eyes when their hoes activated forgotten mines. U.N. reports indicate unexploded ordnance will be a serious hazard in Vietnam for years.

Once again, the U.S. has refused to help, reneging on earlier plans to provide shielded bulldozers which could have removed this danger without threat to life and limb.

7 Family Visits

Many accounts have appeared in the western press in the past four years, indicating that family members are allowed to visit and correspond with prison and reeducation center inmates. (See for example, *Los Angeles Times*, November 3, 1977.)

President Jimmy Carter
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Mr. President:

I urge you to normalize US relations with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, to end the trade embargo, and to offer economic assistance to the Vietnamese people. The hardships facing the Vietnamese in the aftermath of the U.S.-Indochina war have been increased by our government's harsh post-war policy.

Name
Address
City State Zip
Signature

Ms. Joan Baez
Humanitas/Intl. Human Rights Committee
PO Box 1026
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Ms. Baez:

I too am concerned about human rights, but I believe that charges of serious violations must be documented before highly-publicized attacks are made. Contrary to its claims, your "Open Letter to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam" contains many unverified and irresponsible charges from questionable sources. Your concern for the Vietnamese people would be better directed toward a campaign for normal diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Vietnam, and fulfillment of past U.S. aid committments to Vietnam.

Name
Address
City State Zip
Signature

Southeast Asia Resource Center
PO Box 4000-D
Berkeley, CA 94704

Yes, the charges in Joan Baez's "Open Letter" are questionable and unproven. I believe that American concern for the Vietnamese people can best be expressed by a call on our own government to meet its responsibilities to Vietnam.

- ☐ I have written to President Carter.
- ☐ I have written to Joan Baez.
- ☐ To help pay for this campaign, I have enclosed my tax-deductible contribution of $_____.

Name
Address
City State Zip
Signature

* Full documentation for the facts raised in this "Reply to Joan Baez" is available from the Southeast Asia Resource Center.

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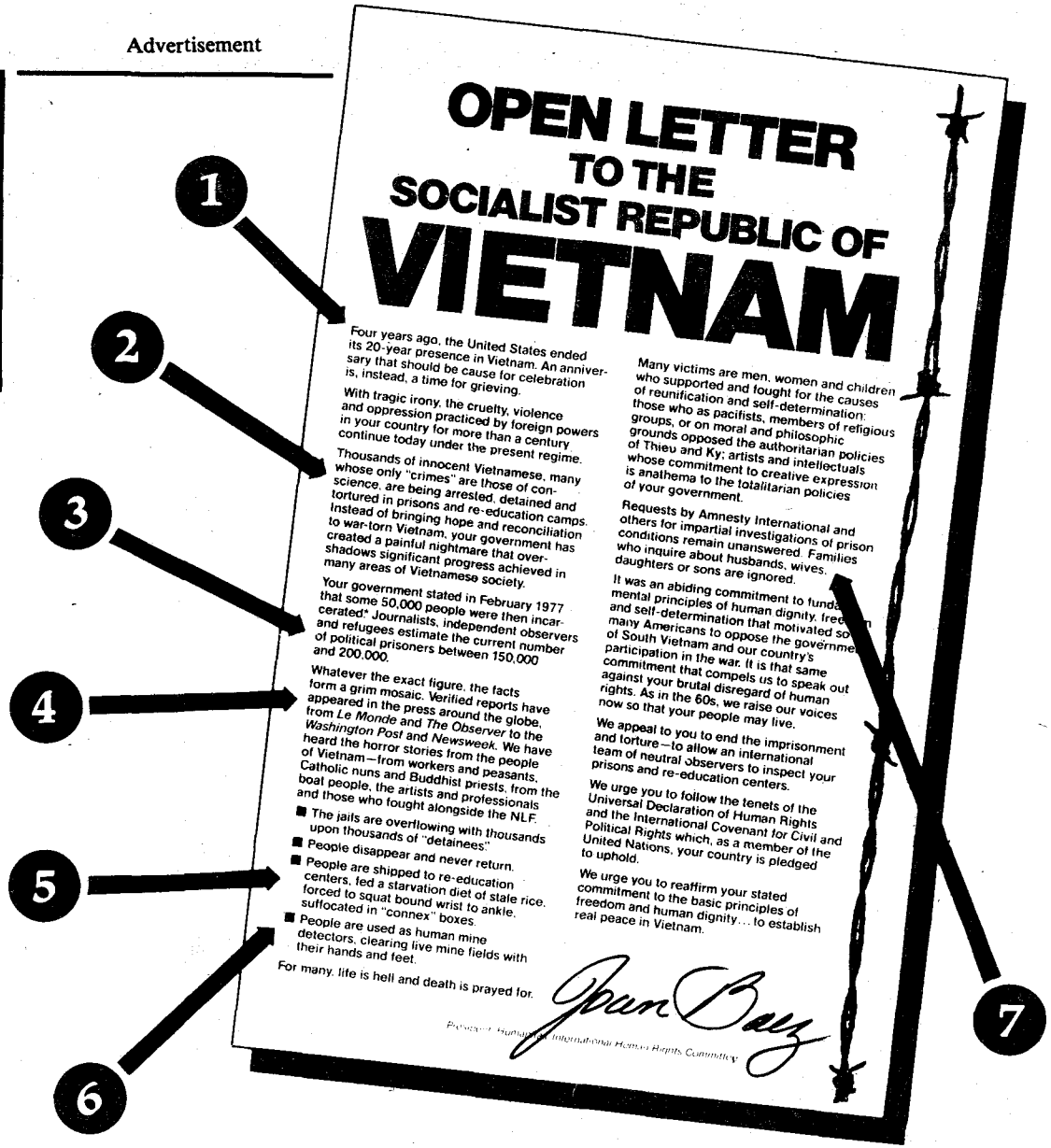
A Reply to Joan Baez

On May 30, 1979, Joan Baez and 80 co-signers placed an "Open Letter to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam" as an advertisement in the *New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, San Francisco Examiner* and *San Francisco Chronicle.*

The charges of human rights violations which the ad contains are extremely serious. Yet on key points of fact, documentation, and interpretation, it is inaccurate and misleading.

The Southeast Asia Resource Center has prepared this reply to the "Open Letter."*

Advertisement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OPEN LETTER TO THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
Four years ago, the United States ended its 20-year presence in Vietnam. An anniversary that should be cause for celebration is, instead, a time for grieving.
With tragic irony, the cruelty, violence and oppression practiced by foreign powers in your country for more than a century continue today under the present regime.
Thousands of innocent Vietnamese, many whose only "crimes" are those of conscience, are being arrested, detained and tortured in prisons and re-education camps. Instead of bringing hope and reconciliation to war-torn Vietnam, your government has created a painful nightmare that overshadows significant progress achieved in many areas of Vietnamese society.
Your government stated in February 1977 that some 50,000 people were then incarcerated* Journalists, independent observers and refugees estimate the current number of political prisoners between 150,000 and 200,000.
Whatever the exact figure, the facts form a grim mosaic. Verified reports have appeared in the press around the globe, from *Le Monde* and *The Observer* to the *Washington Post* and *Newsweek*. We have heard the horror stories from the people of Vietnam—from workers and peasants, Catholic nuns and Buddhist priests, from the boat people, the artists and professionals and those who fought alongside the NLF.
■ The jails are overflowing with thousands upon thousands of "detainees."
■ People disappear and never return.
■ People are shipped to re-education centers, fed a starvation diet of stale rice, forced to squat bound wrist to ankle, suffocated in "connex" boxes.
■ People are used as human mine detectors, clearing live mine fields with their hands and feet.
For many, life is hell and death is prayed for.
Many victims are men, women and children who supported and fought for the causes of reunification and self-determination: those who as pacifists, members of religious groups, or on moral and philosophic grounds opposed the authoritarian policies of Thieu and Ky; artists and intellectuals whose commitment to creative expression is anathema to the totalitarian policies of your government.
Requests by Amnesty International and others for impartial investigations of prison conditions remain unanswered. Families who inquire about husbands, wives, daughters or sons are ignored.
It was an abiding commitment to fundamental principles of human dignity, freedom and self-determination that motivated so many Americans to oppose the government of South Vietnam and our country's participation in the war. It is that same commitment that compels us to speak out against your brutal disregard of human rights. As in the 60s, we raise our voices now so that your people may live.
We appeal to you to end the imprisonment and torture—to allow an international team of neutral observers to inspect your prisons and re-education centers.
We urge you to follow the tenets of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights which, as a member of the United Nations, your country is pledged to uphold.
We urge you to reaffirm your stated commitment to the basic principles of freedom and human dignity... to establish real peace in Vietnam.
Joan Baez
President, International Human Rights Committee

1 The U.S. Role

The Baez ad begins by equating the human rights policy of the Vietnamese government with the policies of the French, Japanese, and American occupation forces in Vietnam.

Consider the record. The U.S. government dropped 4 million tons of bombs on Vietnam between 1965 and 1973, in a war which killed 1.7 million people and wounded another 2 million. Largely as the result of U.S. policies aimed at forcing peasants into U.S.-controlled urban areas, 10 million Vietnamese were made refugees during the war. Millions of gallons of Agent Orange, the defoliant chemical containing the deadly poison dioxin, were dropped on Vietnam's forests, jungles, and rice paddies. Today as a result, the incidence of liver cancer, miscarriage, and birth defects in southern Vietnam is unusually high.

The U.S. spent $150 billion to make war in Vietnam. For seven years, it maintained an occupying army there.

4 Credibility

A single refugee named Doan Van Toai is the principal source for three of the four "verified" reports mentioned

5 Starvation

Millions of Vietnamese now live on a "starvation diet" because Vietnam's war-torn and weather-ravaged farmlands cannot meet the basic food needs of the population. In addition to its refusal to honor promises to provide post-war aid for agricultural recovery, our government has

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ticipate in the peaceful electoral process, but chose instead to impose its will "through the barrel of a gun." Yet the directorate itself embarked on a massive and highly political propaganda campaign subsidized by the Transitional Government. "Use your vote and stop the war. Your vote can stop the war. Your vote will show that you are united behind your leaders and their determination to stop the fighting. Use your vote to show that you do not want a Government imposed upon you." Every dissenting voice had long since been suppressed or forced into exile.

What one witnessed was the most remarkable mobilization, both physical and spiritual, of the entire white population. How enthusiastically the white suburban housewives tutored their cook boys and their garden boys, their 119,000 Benjamins and Isaacs, in the mysteries of the secret ballot; how helpfully they transported them to special seminars, held in schools, for domestic servants. On polling day they packed them into the back seats of their cars (a unique experience for the servants) and delivered them, properly tutored, to the voting cubicles.

The zealous collaboration of white employers in this "nonpolitical" exercise of democratic rights virtually assured a high turnout in the towns, which accounted for about 30 percent of the electorate of 2.9 million. Overt threats were, on the whole, unnecessary: faced by massive unemployment and squalid shantytowns of war refugees, no black with a job lightly puts it in jeopardy. Mobile polling stations, which were justifiable in remote, thinly populated rural areas, were also deployed in the cities by industrial and commercial enterprises. Work stopped for two hours while municipal workers in red dungarees lined up to vote in Salisbury's Second Avenue. At W. Dahmer and Company, Msasa, Salisbury, the entire labor force was transported by company trucks to the polling station. The management is said to have checked the employees' register to ensure that everyone had voted. The Norton Motor Company reportedly used the same methods. Banks closed during working hours so that the staff would have no excuse for not voting.

In the traditionally European farmlands, some 600,000 black laborers, comprising about 20 percent of the electorate, were delivered to the polls like electoral livestock. Grinning humbly, and encircled by armed white territorials (for their own protection), they dutifully made their marks before returning to the maize and tobacco fields and wages equal to $30 a month. As one Karoi farmer put it to me with a tanned smile: "No problem. They're so keen to vote it's unreal." Unreal is the current word in white Rhodesia.

The protected villages were, likewise, no problem. Since 1972, under emergency legislation, more than 500,000 members of black peasant families have been forcibly evicted from their own villages, or kraals, and moved into heavily fortified "keeps" or "protected villages." This despotic policy, virtually inconceivable in relation to a white population, is inspired by the regime's attempt to deprive the "terrs" (terrorists) of shelter, food, clothing and human comfort—to separate, as Mao put it, the fish from the water. Life in the protected villages is strictly regimented by a black Guard Force frequently found guilty in the courts of rape, beatings, robbery and murder, a Guard Force responsible to the white District Commissioner. Curfews confine the inmates to the overcrowded keep for twelve, sometimes twenty-two hours a day.

Instructed to vote, these people voted. Ninety years ago the white man appeared on the scene and made the rules, inventing "laws" and powers to suit his own designs. In April 1979 his Puma gunship came snarling back over the thatched roofs of the kraals, informing the people that they were now sovereign and must vote. Fearing that the District Commissioner might once again punish them by closing their stores, granaries and grinding mills, or by burning their houses, as he had so frequently done during the past two years, the people did not argue. They suspect, quite rightly, that whoever occupies the Prime Minister's residence in Salisbury, their own lives will continue to be dominated by the arbitrary powers of the local white D.C.

Ninety percent of Rhodesia has been under martial law since the end of 1978. Lieutenant General Walls, who brims with Aryan confidence and panache as he describes military raids into neighboring states, insists that free elections are perfectly compatible with martial law. Martial law, he assured visiting reporters, does not replace normal civil law, it merely parallels it. Yet a Ministry of Information circular distributed widely in December 1978 warned the blacks: "In martial law areas the security forces can make their own laws to help them find and kill terrorists.... They will not have to follow the ordinary laws, because they can take too much time."

As in all brutal wars of insurgency and counterinsurgency, soldiers and guerrillas are almost equally feared. (But the guerrillas are "the boys"; usually, though not invariably, they captivate the allegiance of the peasantry.) During the April elections Rhodesia mobilized and deployed its reserves of armed white territorials to an unprecedented degree and with stunning efficiency, drafting grandfathers up to the age of 60. As cars occupied by whites passed through the checkpoints with a cheery wave, all buses and trucks were pulled in, emptied, and their passengers subjected to body searches which long ago became a routine aspect of being black. After all, there are no white terrorists in Rhodesia.

The army and armed police made it clear that they were in business to get people to vote. In Matibi, according to a white informant serving in the security forces, the majority of voters were "herded in by patrols...." In Jani village in Mangwende, people were warned that if they did not vote their village would be bombed. In the Shabani area, four mobile guns and eight truckloads of soldiers moved into the Runde, fanning out in search of villagers who, partly under orders from Zanla guerrillas, were hiding in the bush. Five months earlier these same soldiers had burned thirty-five houses following the murder of a local chief by guerrillas. At Chendambuya, in the Makoni district, security forces determined to "uplift" people to the polls arrived in the evening and warned them against hiding in the bush. At 5:30 the following morning the soldiers duly returned and up-

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fted the voters to a polling station three kilometers away. n the Mrewa area, buses were stopped at roadblocks and ne passengers interrogated: Did you vote, where, when? uch incidents repeated themselves throughout Rhodesia.

Nor should one forget the activities of the "on-sides auxiaries," hastily trained units mainly composed of youths cooped from the urban unemployed. Loyal either to the ishop or to Sithole even though subject to the ultimate ontrol of the security forces, these armed bands, led by uch exotic figures as "Mick Jagger" and "Comrade Max," re now estimated to be 10,000 strong—a number almost qual to that deployed in the field by the Patriotic Front. he auxiliaries have a fine reputation for murder, rape and olitical intimidation. Both Muzorewa and Sithole accuse ne other's auxiliaries of hideous crimes; both insist that neir own perform blamelessly, are models of civic rectitude.

In several tribal trust lands I have met frightened villagers vith credible, mutually corroborative stories of the intimiatory tactics employed by Muzorewa's Pfumo reVanhu Spear of the People) during the election. A witness in lanket reported that auxiliaries had gone from door to door n the township warning people to vote or "just you wait!" n Seke, the Pfumo reVanhu herded people to the polls at unpoint. In Zwimba, they warned pre-election meetings hat nonvoters would be shot.

I followed Muzorewa's campaign trail through the "hot" errain of Chiweshe, where the Bishop traveled along danerous dirt roads in a vast, *Star Wars* mobile dinosaur, rmor-plated and mine-proofed, flanked by a strong Special Branch escort. Addressing rallies in the protected villages, he Bishop made adroit use of verbal ambiguities. Voting, ne said in Shona, is a *must*; no one will be *allowed* to stay at ome on polling day. Such remarks could, of course, be explained away as mere metaphors, but when a great leader confronts the dewy-eyed, cowed inmates of a protected village and says "must," the subtle distinctions between moral nd physical imperatives get blurred.

Only two issues were consistently discussed during the election campaign: peace and personalities. In other words, which leader, which party, was best equipped to bring peace. "This voting is the end of the war," I was repeatedly assured by men waiting to vote. No one seemed the least concerned about the entrenched clauses of the Constitution which guarantee the white minority a privileged status in Zimbabwe Rhodesia; indeed, only the urban elite had even heard about them. What a stroke of genius it was to offer the blacks an election but not a referendum, thus obscuring, burying all relevant debate about, the framework within which the election was staged.

Ever since the Salisbury Agreement was signed in March 1978, dissent has been virtually outlawed. Nkomo's ZAPU and Mugabe's ZANU enjoyed a brief respite of legality before being banned in the late summer. Once again ZAPU militants were rounded up (at least 1,000 of them) and detained without fair trial. The *Zimbabwe Times*, an independent newspaper which dared to advocate all-party talks and to cast doubt on the viability of the internal agreement, was banned in October. Many university professors sympathetic to Nkomo or Mugabe have fled abroad. The student body, strongly in favor of the Patriotic Front, has been decimated.

Voting will not end this war. Far from laying down their arms, "the boys" merely denounced the internal leaders as sellouts. I flew in Sithole's two-engined airplane to Nyamaropa on the Mozambique border. As we circled the valley airstrip where Sithole was scheduled to address a rally, not a human being was to be seen—it turned out that Mugabe's Zanla had cleared the entire valley, expelling 10,000 people from their homes, rather than allow Sithole's auxiliaries to take control. In the fortified police post, attacked six times in six months, a message from Zanla, scribbled on carton cardboard, had been pinned to the wall of the mess, beside a girlie calendar. The message was addressed to "Mabinyas," which means "Boers." "Smith is a dog down with dogs. We want bloodshed to Smith's dogs not dialogue down with you Smith's dogs. Zanla forces." Sithole, the eloquent politician who once commanded the guerrillas, stalked out of the mess.

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That trip brought home to me, in immediate human terms, the extent of white military power in Rhodesia. The white Special Branch men, detailed to guard Sithole and the Co-Minister of War, Noel Mukono, treated them with a form of polite contempt. As the plane touched down at Mangula, four hours later, Sithole's bodyguard turned to him with a broad grin of triumph and announced that Nkomo's headquarters in Lusaka had the previous night been "taken out." Neither Sithole, a member of the four-man Executive Council, nor his Minister of War knew a thing about it. The two blacks sat in stunned silence, their shoulders hunched in an ancient subjection. And yet only a week before, in a cynical move calculated to win for himself pro-Nkomo votes in Matabeleland, Sithole had proposed that after the elections Nkomo should be invited home as figurehead President of the new state. I put my tape recorder under his chin and invited a comment. "Well . . . well," he murmured, "it's very difficult for me to react rationally, so to speak. . . ."

Muzorewa also admitted that he had not been briefed in advance about the Lusaka raid, but you can be sure that Ian Smith had been. "What difference would it make if we put an African in charge of the armed forces?" Muzorewa demanded. "None at all. We are all—black and white—born-and-bred Zimbabweans, are we not?" Asked whether, according to the Orwellian formula, he believed it was just that some Zimbabweans should be more equal than others, he replied: "That is a matter of opinion." Although the whites have retained their iron grip on Rhodesia's security forces, few of them qualify as "born-and-bred"; indeed, less than half of the current white population was living in Rhodesia before the Unilateral Declaration of Independence fourteen years ago.

For many whites, including the disappointed mercenaries seeking to "cull the gooks" and "zap the munts" after humiliating defeats in Algeria, the Congo and Vietnam, Rhodesia is just another watering hole, an adventure playground, a duty-free shop, one more fruit machine in a real man's flight from income tax, labor unions and "socialism." If the war continues, as it will, these whites will leave, will "take the gap," in increasing numbers. Already the young white officers of the Rhodesian Light Infantry, the Grey's Scouts, the Selous Scouts and the Special Air Service are openly voicing disaffection, a rapid crisis of identity precipitated by the prospect of a form of black rule. The fierce bickering after the election results were announced, Sithole's cynical allegations of "grave irregularities" and his boycott of the National Assembly, combined with the emergence of deep fissures within the Bishop's own U.A.N.C., have done much to dampen the euphoria with which the whites greeted the 64 percent election turnout. Now the refrain is: "All these bloody kaffir politicians are the same."

And why do the educated blacks make such strenuous efforts to evade military conscription? This infuriates the young whites: "It's *their* bloody war now, isn't it—so why the hell do we have to fight it for them?" No, it isn't *their* war: almost every black student has a brother or cousin fighting for "the boys"; whatever their political allegiance the educated blacks regard with horror any pressganging into fratricide.

According to official statistics, the "terrorists" are taking a hammering: fifty killed today, twenty-eight yesterday. Ye the election demonstrated again how extensive is th Patriotic Front's grip on vast expanses of countryside—even if one views with skepticism Mugabe's claim to contro the daily lives of 750,000 people inside the country. In th electoral province of Matabeleland South, the power o Nkomo's Zipra forces was such that only 27.7 percent of th electorate voted. Across the vast lowland plains of Victoria the resistance of Zanla and Zipra guerrillas kept the turnou down to 36.4 percent. I flew into the parched brown triba trust land of Buhera on the second day of polling. Almos all the dirt tracks had been dug up, mined and rendered im passable. Half the schools were closed and the dip tank (which alone protect cattle from the fatal tsetse fly) were al out of action. Not a telephone line had functioned for fou months. As the District Commissioner put it, "That' dreary when you want to talk to your kids in boardin school."

Some 450 Zanla guerillas reside permanently in the Buhera region, while other units pass through or their way to Gutu or Charter, equipped with A.K. 47s, recoilless rifles, R.P.G. rocket launchers and mines. "Mujibas"—youths who serve as scouts for th guerrillas—monitor all movements from the barren hills Ambushes of military convoys are frequent. By midafter noon on the second day of voting only 4,000 out of 60,00 people had voted. Outside the D.C.'s office was pinned a notice offering a reward of 5,000 Rhodesian dollars for in formation leading to the death or capture of any senior ter rorist. Over the D.C.'s desk was a luminous orange sticker "I am staying to help make it work."

Perhaps he will. Yet fifteen out of sixty D.C.s have qui during the past year. If the West now decides that the Bishop is "our man" and accords him full recognition and the lifting of sanctions, then military support from South Africa may provide the neo-colonial state (white power, black mask, as Jean Genet would say) with a temporary respite. Yet even by the basest criteria of political calculation and power politics, such a move would compromise the West's standing in black Africa without achieving the compensating goal of a friendly and stable Zimbabwe. The Bishop's brilliant election slogan was "Vote for a Winner. Be a Winner." But Muzorewa's castle is built on sand. As the white exodus gathers momentum, the spine of the security forces, the white territorial units, will be fatally weakened. The internal settlement will then collapse, as indeed I believe it deserves to do.

If America and Britain now revert to the old, pre-Vietnam, Manichaean reflexes of the cold war, damning Nkomo and Mugabe as clients of the Kremlin and Castro, then the West will almost certainly be embarking on a painfully self-fulfilling prophecy. Within five years the vodka will flow in a city once called Salisbury. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

The Gang of More Than Four

ROBERT LEKACHMAN

THE NEOCONSERVATIVES: The Men Who Are Changing America's Politics. *By Peter Steinfels. Simon & Schuster. 335 pp. $11.95.*

As a reviewer, I most enjoy a thoroughly bad book, full of detestable sentiments phrased in execrable prose by a perpetrator of poor character, say the latest volume of Richard Nixon's memoirs or Henry Kissinger's forthcoming account of his humane conduct in Vietnam and Cambodia. I can tolerate a product which, like the curate's legendary egg, is good in part as an opportunity to display a judicious temperament suspected by few. It is people like Peter Steinfels who present a problem. His *The Neoconservatives* is an admirable essay which I am more inclined to applaud than to review.

Although I shall struggle to enter a caveat or two to preserve self-respect, I can in equity begin only by saying that he has written a sensitive, analytically acute and delightfully devastating dissection of Irving Kristol, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Daniel Bell and lesser members of the *Public Interest/ Commentary* school for the hard-hearted. Moreover, Steinfels has kept his temper all the way, a feat I do not guarantee to match in the remainder of this comment.

In short, I am reduced to examining the reasons why I admire *The Neoconservatives.* First is its attention to tone and manner. Steinfels emphasizes the distinction between the "formal, literary, learned, and serious" style of the coterie and the political reportage of *The Nation* and *The New Republic* and academic articles in scholarly journals. Rising beyond the turmoil of the day, neo-conservatives try to ally themselves with nineteenth-century classical liberalism. Nathan Glazer, Robert Nisbet and Irving Kristol take pains to contrast the liberalism of John Stuart Mill, Edmund Burke and Adam Smith with their opponents' "illiberal" passion for equality of result and redistribution of income and wealth. As for their distinguished predecessors, human nature is for them self-regarding and stable. As Banfield and Moynihan emphasize, poverty is mostly an aspect of class. Edward Banfield's lower-class permanent welfare clients live for the moment, refuse to postpone sensory gratification, and abhor bourgeois virtues like thrift and industry.

It follows that government, however benign, can do comparatively little to rectify the defects of class and individual character which separate members of the underclass from the rest of us. Thus, issue after issue of *Commentary* and *Public Interest* feature articles which describe failures of busing, affirmative action, job training, compensatory education and urban rehabilitation. If James Wilson is not proving that violent crime will diminish because fewer young males will be around in the 1980s to mug their elders, Martin Feldstein is analyzing the unemployment statistics to demonstrate that joblessness is an overrated problem, or Robert Nisbet is bewailing the twilight of authority and the deterioration of the academy.

As Steinfels makes clear, neo-conservatives disagree among themselves over the appropriate scope of public action. All the same, they tend to prefer private to public action because government is both coercive and inefficient. Bureaucracy, seldom recognized in its private versions by neo-conservatives, is clumsy. The Federal establishment knows how to collect and spend money, but not how to rehabilitate criminals, teach lower-class boys and girls to read, rebuild urban or rural slums and otherwise improve the lot of losers.

Not that neo-conservatives worry excessively about the hard lot of such people. Winners themselves, they prefer the company of their peers. Many of them lower-middle-class ex-radicals, they cherish the comforts of status and income in middle life which their own achievements and the patronage of the business community have showered upon them. Irving Kristol routinely scourges his New Class of disaffected intellectuals. Steinfels carefully sketches the array of foundations, such as the American Enterprise Institute, the Hoover Institution and the Heritage Foundation, and the clutch of new periodicals, among them *Regulation* and *Policy Review*, which supply stipends, positions and publication outlets to right-thinking neo-conservatives. These days particularly ambitious intellectuals on the right will fare much better than contributors to *The Nation.*

The individual chapters on Kristol, Bell and Moynihan are all good but my own favorite is the dissection of the junior Senator from New York. Steinfels relentlessly pursues the twists and turns of Moynihan's opinions and political affiliations. His analysis of Moynihan's mastery of simultaneous affirmation and denial is acute and amusing—and fair. He thinks Moynihan got a bad rap as a racist because he singled out black family structure as the major explanation of the slow economic progress of the black community. Although I concur, I must add that Moynihan often and certainly in this instance almost asks to be misinterpreted.

I demur slightly from Steinfels's mildly favorable evaluation of Daniel Bell. Although he properly skewers Bell's attempt to present himself as liberal in politics, conservative in culture and radical in economics, he is more inclined than I find plausible to credit Bell with the beginning of a new social philosophy. Despite the considerable scholarship and intelligence of Bell's major writings, his essays in futurology continue to impress me as just the most sophisticated of neo-conservative cop-outs. Attention to the fairly distant future is an excellent excuse to ignore the dilemmas of the present and remove oneself from gritty disputes over health care, full employment and racial and economic equity. Only the dimmest of answers from Bell comes back to the perennial question, what is to be done.

Finally, Steinfels may take his neo-conservatives a trifle too seriously. Their current prominence is a sign less of their own intellectual power and originality than of the stagnation of political discussion in the post-Vietnam era. When the current of discourse begins again to flow at decent speed, the neo-conservatives will be revealed as clever but superficial purveyors of the scraps

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from the intellectual high tables of their eighteenth- and nineteenth-century predecessors. May the day soon come.□

Word Imperfect

STEVEN M. L. ARONSON

DECADENCE: The Strange Life of an Epithet. *By Richard Gilman. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 180 pp. $8.95.*

Having discerned in "decadence" a piece of language that had long since lost its quiddity and its crisp outline, the critic Richard Gilman undertook to write the biography of this strangely inextinguishable—this insatiate performer of a—word. In treating an abstraction as a living substance, he was taking a great risk, but nothing less would do: the life and death of a word were at stake, and Gilman believes with Wallace Stevens that "words of the world are the life of the world."

Gilman concludes that although "decadence" may not be worth saving, it will probably ankle from this century into the next, not even feeling the pinch of its newly fashionable shoes. At least the readers of *Decadence* will no longer be able to use the word with any intellectual ease.

It's been used glibly, wrongly, thoughtlessly a thousand, thousand times. Gilman proceeds to make plain the muddle: decadence is not a fact, not a proven reality, but a value judgment, a category of belief or opinion, and there is therefore no *thing* to which it actually and legitimately applies.

Decadence is far more than the story of how "decadence" has been corrupted as a word; it is about, in Gilman's magisterial phrase, "our shackled relation to language," about the ways "we cheat ourselves of truth through language." If we come away from the book urgently understanding the care we must take of words, it is no wonder: Gilman's own writing has afforded us a leper's squint, if not a glimpse, into what Nabokov called "the promised land where, at last, words are meant to mean what they mean." When Gilman uses such hard words as "truth," "standards," "valor," they are not mere stooges; we feel, behind their use, a sincerity.

What shocks us about *Decadence* is its combination of passion and precision. Gilman manages to be at the same time adventurous and austere, imaginative and profound. He employs not only his considerable scholarly skills, hard-earned and hard-learned, but also the techniques of the contemporary pundit, the litmus observer of the tokens of our time. He certainly puts the taste-makers in their place, as when, for instance, he describes Kenneth Tynan and Pauline Kael as "popularizing, slumming commentators who use 'decadence' as though it were beyond question, a settled matter."

The book continually engages us in acts of discovery, moral as well as aesthetic and linguistic. Gilman's commitment here to literary and historical dissent is very much a moral—and even a religious—one. The pulse, the vibrations of the book are those of a religious person, though religious in a secular rather than a sacred sense.

Gilman digs for his word with the scholar's tools, and the earth opens at his feet—to reveal structure after historical structure, a city with a city on top of it, another, another. . . . Then, having been the archeologist, he becomes the architect of his own idea. Only critics and academics with fixed intellectual and safe cultural positions to defend will fail to appreciate the book's central passionate argument. Gilman distills the secret at the smug center of the con act of most of our purveyors of culture, who on the whole know very little but make a performance of it all in aesthetic terms. A few pages into Gilman's book, we realize that there is no way of approaching the issue in terms that are significantly different from his.

Decadence, then, is a strenuous clearing of ground—brambles and weeds, boulders and stones—so that the word itself (not the label, not the idea) can be seen for the first time in its bogosity.

"Nouns," Gilman writes, "those primary materials of our verbal world . . . become dangerous precisely when they are abstract and doubly so when they pronounce judgment. . . . 'Sex,' for instance, is what it is (whatever it may be), but when 'sin' takes it into its embrace, as has happened so often in the past and still does, a strange darkening of the word occurs."

Gilman suspects that "decadence" is a word of the same order as "sin," a word apt to "shake and confuse the moral universe as well as the universe of meaning." And his suspicion is fully justified by the paradigm of decadence that has come down to us:

> neurasthenia and sexual perversity; boredom combined with exquisite refinement; nostalgia for the corrupt; fascination with the splendors and despairs of ancient cultures; 'progress' as an anathema; taste as a means of survival; a concern with manner at the expense of substance; a hunger for the deviant as a positive principle . . .

Today the word has been further debased into a label, applied promiscuously not only to all manner of sexual practices and tastes but to desserts ("gorgeously decadent chocolate sundaes"), styles of dress ("deliciously decadent pants suits"), even politics (Senator Javits is quoted in *The Times* as castigating the "moral and systemic decadence that has led us to the tragedy of Watergate")—leagues distant from the days when it was used in serious discourse to describe broad cultural movements and the conditions of life of entire societies.

Rome has always been widely regarded as the forerunner, the prototype of "decadence." A myth, Gilman claims: decline or decadence was an invention of the ancient world, a "choice of belief"; in fact, the period of Rome's most perverse sexual behavior was also the period of her greatest vigor and martial power. We come to see how, from the beginning, decadence has played a scapegoat role as an ascription.

France was the place where decadence became a central issue, especially during the time of Baudelaire. That the man who called it "a word for the lazy . . . for ignorant pedagogues" should have the stain of it upon his memory—for Baudelaire has become the receptacle of all the phenomena (mostly sexual and mostly grotesque) that "decadence" is supposed to describe—is one of those spectacular ironies with which the course of history is strewn. Gilman persuades us that Baudelaire was someone for whom decadence was a matter of "metaphysical inquiry and leaning," that he was

Steven M. L. Aronson, a former publisher, is co-author of a forthcoming book, HYPE: The Phenomenon of Dispropriation *(William Morrow & Company).*

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essentially a spiritualist and a releaser of creative force for all mankind.

Together with Huysmans, his spiritual heir, Baudelaire was the chief instigator not only of the French Decadence but of the short-lived English Decadent movement which, "along with those familiar scenes of Roman debauchery (Fellini's *Satyricon* is the latest, most hyperbolic example) and images of Berlin in the twenties . . . continues to provide us with our chief vulgarized sense of the word's historical incarnation."

No one has written more incisively than Gilman—or, for that matter, with greater sympathy and empathy—of that period's representative decadent, Oscar Wilde. This "great florid, self-appreciating personality" was the first human being to whom the word "decadent" was ever applied, and Gilman finds him a

> deeply problematic ancestor . . . the unrivaled victim of the word's vagueness and malleability. . . . The word is not supple enough to contain his contradictions. The effect of applying it to him is to arrest him in a kind of paralysis or to impel him backward, exhibiting him as outside the central moral and psychic energies and currents of his time, a spectator and solipsist, when the truth was that he was at the active heart of the age.

The world began to take a livelier interest in the word; "decadent" came to be applied to details of personal behavior, to be brandished by political extremists and cultural soothsayers alike. But, Gilman emphasizes, "there never was a time, as intellectual historians crave and, succumbing, sometimes invent, when Decadence showed itself in clean lines, set off from the rest of art and thought or . . . when it was definitive, since nobody agreed on what the definitions were."

In the book's last section, Gilman charts the career of "decadence" as a fashionable term, identifying the process by which it passed from being a word with a "core of passionate seriousness" into ritzy illiteracy and brittle camp. "History, language, meaning all disappear together under the stupidity," he writes, with an indignation born of intimacy with both the word and the idea.

There are occasions enough for his indignation. To Morris Dickstein's description of the experiments of such contemporary American writers as Barth, Barthelme and Pynchon as the "decadence of Modernism," Gilman is quick to reply:

> Serious writers at any time write as they will and as they must. They do not "fall down" or "away from" standards, for the standards themselves are constantly changing and new writing is precisely what changes them. Only a lofty, categorizing, anthropomorphizing impulse, one whose effect, if not intention, is to turn art into the material for dissertations, would find decadence in what is really fluctuation, the long rhythms of human expression.

It was Eliot who said that without conviction there can be no real style. *Decadence* has both in balanced measure, and joins the stellar company of Lionel Trilling's *On Sincerity and Authenticity,* Susan Sontag's *Illness as Metaphor,* and William Gass's *On Being Blue.* □

From Weatherman to Warner Bros.

PETER BISKIND

CREATIVE DIFFERENCES: Profiles of Hollywood Dissidents. *By David Talbot and Barbara Zheutlin. South End Press. 370 pp. $4.50.*

Creative Differences is a fascinating contribution to a perennial debate among leftists: should "progressives," as they used to be called, work within the system or without? This question cannot be decided in the abstract, since the answer depends on time, place and circumstance. *Creative Differences* focuses on Hollywood, particularly fertile ground for this debate, because the left is as susceptible to the siren song of the silver screen as anyone else—perhaps more so. At the same time, it has also had good reason to regret this dalliance, rudely driven from the studio couch by the furies of reaction as it was in the 1950s. Authors Barbara Zheutlin and David Talbot profile sixteen people who work, in one capacity or another, in the

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"industry," and make a more or less convincing argument that this is a good thing. Not only do they make a difference, say Zheutlin and Talbot, but popular culture is so important a molder of consciousness that people serious about social change cannot afford to ignore it.

In the 1960s, a book like this one would have been greeted with derisive hoots. Left-wing film makers, righteous in their indignation, flocked to groups like Newsreel, and dedicated themselves to building an opposition culture that confronted Hollywood with images of its own corruption, while at the same time offering glimpses of a new millennium, a postindustrial utopia where money would be replaced by love, competition by cooperation, domination by freedom. Newsreel's black-and-white documentaries were to play a role, along with the underground press and acid rock, in the greening of America, revolution in our lifetime. "Straight" culture was beneath contempt, and those who operated within its purview were regarded as lost souls, wicked beyond imagination. Hollywood was the last place leftists would go to do political work.

But as the high tide of social protest receded, the counterculture found itself floundering on the sand of the 1970s. Leftist film makers stared gloomily at stacks of rhetorical documentaries rapidly collecting dust. Meanwhile, out in Hollywood, the blacklist had finally crumbled, and the highly centralized studio system that had enforced it had itself fallen prey to an assortment of high-powered agents and big-name stars all intent on producing their own films. Leftists who were faced with the unwelcome choice between selling out or sacrificing their ambition and talents to exhausting, low-paying political work suddenly realized that they might be able to have their cake and eat it too. They could make it big and at the very same time play a part in transforming, or at least moderating, some of the worst excesses of capitalist culture. The grainier-than-thou politic of Newsreel was replaced by the reach-more-people-than-thou politic of Jane Fonda.

Many of Zheutlin and Talbot's subjects, like Mike Gray who made *The Murder of Fred Hampton* in the early 1970s and went on to write the script for *The China Syndrome,* or Lynn Phillips who worked in New York Newsreel and eventually became a scriptwriter for *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman,* made this choice. Others, like Mark Rosenberg and Thom Mount, dubbed by the press along with Paula Weinstein the Baby Moguls, did not have any film experience prior to going to Hollywood. Rosenberg, now a vice president in charge of production at Warner Brothers, was once a Weatherman, and Mount, an executive at Universal, was active in civil rights and antiwar movements as an undergraduate. Others, like Carol Chaka and Lynda Calhoun, became militants during their tenure as secretaries at Hollywood studios.

Jane Fonda, Gray, Mount and Rosenberg all, to one degree or another, argue that the left can operate effectively in Hollywood. All agree that there is little overt political censorship, that producers will back anything so long as it sells. Gray had *The China Syndrome* script returned by one producer who called it "political sabotage of the nuclear power industry," but he feels that this was an exception. "I'm convinced that in general the people in charge of the industry couldn't care less about the subject of the picture as long as it makes money."

Thom Mount, who supervised production of a series of liberal, black-oriented films like *The Bingo Long Traveling All-Stars and Motor Kings, Car Wash, Which Way Is Up?* and persuaded Universal to distribute *Blue Collar,* feels the same way. "Studios will produce anything that they think will make money."

Jane Fonda is even more optimistic. Since she cleaned up her act (see, for example, her ritual repudiation of the 1960s in a recent turn with Barbara Walters on ABC), she has been able to pick and choose her films, making a series of successful movies, all of which, to one degree or another, gently rock the boat. She wants to harness traditional Hollywood techniques to progressive goals. "People in my generation all grew up hating Indians, objectifying women, fearing 'mobs' and all that. Those moviemakers really knew how to manipulate people's emotions. We have to do the same thing."

Fonda is right, but the people profiled in *Creative Differences* exaggerate, I think, the ease with which this can be done. Studios and the conglomerates that own them do in fact occasionally produce films antagonistic to their class interest. Zheutlin and Talbot cite Gulf and Western Industries' production (midwived by Paramount) of *Godfather II,* which contains a scene set in pre-Castro Cuba where Mafia dons and American businessmen carve up the economic wealth of the island. The paradox is all the sharper because the scene was actually shot in the Dominican Republic, where Gulf and Western has large holdings. But cinematographer Haskell Wexler told the authors how Gulf and Western "sabotaged" *Medium Cool,* the feature he directed in the late 1960s. *Medium Cool* bombed, and Wexler has never directed another film. He started out with the optimism of Fonda et al., but learned differently. "It was probably naive of me, but I figured that if you made an interesting film that was well reviewed and exciting, they [the studios] would jump on it, they would publicize it, they would sell it. I was convinced that if you did something well enough they had to recognize it. And that just wasn't so."

Creative Differences is filled with success stories, but three of the women who are profiled, clerical workers who tried to organize studio secretaries, failed. And not only did they fail, two of them left the industry altogether, exhausted and disillusioned. They failed partly because they were women, and therefore faced higher odds than the men who succeeded, and partly because they were engaged in real political organizing, at the bottom.

The fact is that Fonda, Mount, Rosenberg and others like them are exceptions. They have been lucky. When people like Bruce Gilbert, Fonda's associate, say things like "[Hollywood] today is wide open in terms of what kind of films can get made. . . . We're making just what we've always wanted to make," the "we" in question is one or two exceptionally fortunate people. Gilbert sounds like Dale Carnegie; it's another version of the good old American try-hard-and-you-can-make-it routine. There's nothing worse, more smug and sanctimonious, than people paid well to be virtuous.

The progressive films made over the last five years or so should not be discounted, but neither should their importance be exaggerated. Even in the 1950s liberal themes surfaced in unlikely places, in Westerns like *High Noon* and sci-fi films like Robert Wise's *The Day the Earth Stood Still* or Jack Arnold's *It Came From Outer Space.* Recent movies like *Julia* or *The Front* are eminently safe and comfortable. It is hardly

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controversial to attack fascism or expose the blacklist thirty years later. Even the spate of films critical of the Vietnam War benefit from the passage of time and the consensus that the war was a mistake, and are able to cloak themselves in the pieties of an eminently respectable Hollywood genre: the anti-war film that goes back to *All Quiet on the Western Front*, if not earlier. Films like *Coming Home, Go Tell the Spartans,* or *The Boys in Company C* could not have been made in 1968.

Moreover, Hollywood today is dominated by New Right writers and directors like John Milius, Michael Cimino, Paul Schraeder and Martin Scorcese. Liberal films are being produced, but with the exceptions of *The China Syndrome,* freaks like *Animal House* or Masterpiece Theatre productions like *Julia,* they are left at the starting gate by racist films like *Midnight Express.* It will be interesting to see if the success of *The China Syndrome* makes room for more films like it. It seems at least as likely that its impact, multiplied a hundredfold by the Three Mile Island disaster, will open some eyes in corporate board rooms and diminish the chance of there being "one, two, three *China Syndromes.*"

Zheutlin and Talbot are not oblivious to these facts. They are alert to the high quotient of pure self-interest in their subjects and do not conceal the fact that most of them are primarily interested in their careers. They are well aware that there simply is no Hollywood left, in the sense that there was in the 1930s and 1940s. The breakdown of the studio system which made some recent liberal films possible also destroyed the cohesiveness of the Hollywood work force, the legions of electricians, grips and gaffers who sufficiently regarded themselves as workers to organize.

The fact remains, nevertheless, that one *China Syndrome* is brighter than a thousand documentaries, and therefore *Creative Differences* is well worth reading. It contains an excellent chapter on the scandalous state of the exclusive Hollywood craft unions, and two rare interviews with Abraham Polonsky and Albert Maltz, which alone are worth the price of admission. Maltz discusses at length the famous "What Shall We Ask of Writers?" incident, wherein he criticized the Communist Party line on art in an article published in *New Masses,* only later to change his mind under intense party pressure. And it concludes with a call for a genuine organization of Hollywood media workers that would begin to overcome some of the inevitable limitations experienced by people working alone. □

Memory Serves

TEMMA KAPLAN

BLOOD OF SPAIN. *By Ronald Fraser. Pantheon Books. 608 pp. $15.95.*

Ronald Fraser began *Blood of Spain* in 1973, shortly after ten leaders of the clandestine Workers Commissions were sentenced to total of 172 years in prison. He ended his interviews in May 1975, five months before Franco executed five young alleged terrorists and six months before the regime agreed to pull the plug and allow Franco to die. This book, though ostensibly a history of the Spanish Civil War told by participants, underscores the despair of Franco's last thousand days and the hopes for post-Franco Spain.

The Spanish title, *Remember and Remind Them,* is appropriate, for the episodes in the book are efforts to recall perceptions before they were contaminated by Franco's rule. At one level, *Blood of Spain* is about the drama of the Spanish Civil War when four insurgent generals overthrew the legally elected Second Republic and precipitated the carnage that resulted in one million dead and an additional 200,000 to 500,000 executed between 1939 and 1942. Along with the French and Russian Revolutions, the Spanish Civil War revealed the terrors of class war. From Langston Hughes to Ernest Hemingway, from Tito to Togliatti, antifascists took their stand in Spain. And so did Hitler, Mussolini and the American oil companies, chiefly Gulf and Texaco, which, despite nonintervention pacts, gave soldiers, arms and fuel to Franco. Even more important roles were played by ordinary women and men in what was, after all, their war.

Testimony about the war by textile workers, miners, priests, schoolteachers, shopkeepers, businessmen, housewives, landowners and peasants of every political disposition are brought to bear on their subsequent views of the period 1973 to 1975. A novelist as well as a historian, Fraser keeps the two periods alive through the words of participants who stress the continuities between the issues for which they fought and their hopes for post-Franco Spain. Basque and Catalan nationalism, workers and women's rights, and heroism concern Spaniards today as they did then.

The Basque country, frequently called Spain's Northern Ireland, has been locked in armed struggle led by terrorists of E.T.A. (Basque Homeland and Freedom) for the past twenty years. More than half of all parliamentary delegates from the Basque country returned in the March 1979 elections were either members of the Basque Nationalist Party or the political representatives of the terrorist wing of E.T.A. Describing the Civil War, a Basque woman told Fraser that for Basques, the real enemy was "the Spanish, of course. 'Red' or 'white'—they were brothers. We were 'cousins'—and by cousins we mean the person who pays the consequences." Catalan nationalism is quite different, based as it is on the strength of a repressed language and cultural pride. A conservative

Temma Kaplan is the author of Anarchists of Andalusia *(Princeton University Press).*

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Catholic Catalan lawyer boasted to Fraser that his family was saved from leftist persecution because a local anarchist interceded. "He was a Catalan, that was the difference; not that Catalans are better people, simply that they have been Catalans for generations and produce authentic anarchists."

Despite forced membership in the fascist labor syndicate between 1939 and 1976, Spanish workers kept the memory of workers' control alive from a revolutionary period during the Civil War. In the northeast, factories and fields collectivized and, according to one worker, "It was amazing, everyone turned into a parrot, everyone wanted to say what he or she thought and felt. They obviously felt themselves in charge now and with the right to speak for themselves. . . ."

Where Franco triumphed during the war, he set the pattern of thought control, particularly over women, that characterized his regime: "Create, in girls' schools, a very feminine atmosphere, using the work tasks appropriate to the home. . . ."

Where the left was strong, women brought into question existing relations between sexes, just as a strong feminist movement that demands divorce and abortion rights emerged during the last days of Franco. During the war, Mercedes Comaposada, speaking for the 20,000-strong anarchist women's federation, Free Women (Mujeres Libres), argued that, "As long as any woman is kept as an object and prevented from developing her personality, prostitution, in fact, continues to exist." A former peasant woman from Aragon who lived monogamously in a lifelong relationship claims that, "Not being married is a freedom—not a freedom to do as one pleases but the freedom to be oneself in a human relationship. . . ."

Civil wars resemble nightmares in which the mundane is terrifying. In the three-year-long seige of Republican Madrid, combatants hopped on trolleys. "'To the front—five centimos,' the tram conductors began calling out." The tram might be filled by "barbers who hadn't even had time to take off their white smocks and were still carrying their combs. . . ." Heroism became commonplace, as it has been during the past forty years. At a Madrid rally during the war, a peasant lectured on how to blow up the tanks Mussolini had given Franco to smash Madrid. "'You lie on the ground with a bomb in your hand and you let the tank get to within 3 meters and you throw the bomb at the tracks. If it explodes, the tank blows up on the spot. And if it doesn't—if it doesn't explode. . . .' He stopped, not knowing how to continue. 'If it doesn't,' he added finally, 'the tank crushes you. . . .'"

The strength of *Blood of Spain* lies not only in heroism but in the sense of betrayal experienced by right-wingers. A reactionary Carlist peasant who hated the Republic for its anticlericalism "set off for war with the ideals of a religious crusade." He supported Franco only to become disillusioned by the poverty of the Castilian peasants among whom he fought and by the anticlericalism and brutality of the fascists in the Falange. These *falangistas,* who viewed themselves as revolutionaries, suffered the fate of the Nazi S.A., for neither Franco nor Hitler endorsed revolution. The truly religious in Spain suffered forty years of Church subordination to Franco, and some of the most militant struggles of the 1970s were led by worker-priests and Catholic trade unions.

This is a hopeful book since it

The Storyteller Tells His Story

And they lived happily
ever after, he whispers, lowering
the enameled sky of late summer
onto their heads and new
shoulders, rosy as a host
of Tiepolo's angels. He arranges light
to cast no shadow on those faultless
afternoons where no weather
lives, as in the cardboard
fold-out of the fairy tale he
will tell: once upon a time,
he begins, as he pours time
into his black hat so that it
disappears as do the endings
of all good tricks. The prince and
princess appear in his blond
voice, gowned in the satin
motions of his hands. The prince
will slay the angry dragon, whose
fiery breath dives into the grass
like a kite on a windless
day. The princess sighs and
they dance a *saltarello.* The story-
teller whispers what he always
whispers and goes home.

It is evening in an old kitchen
where his wife stirs flour
to thicken the stew. A radio
talks into their shadows that lie
across the checkered linoleum,
the wooden table, the only
place they ever mingle now
comfortably. The rent is due.
He rolls the cuff of his green
cotton shirt and shapes the mashed
potatoes into a white castle with
a moat and no windows. Their brown
mongrel barks at a rising
wind. His wife sighs and they
go on living a long time.

Nancy Esposito

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demonstrates that heroism is not as rare a commodity as we think. After Franco's victory in 1939, many Spaniards escaped to France, were incarcerated in French concentration camps, and were captured by the Nazis. Thousands joined the *maquis,* and thousands more died in Nazi extermination camps. Following World War II, abortive efforts were made to overthrow Franco through guerrilla warfare. One of the men in *Blood of Spain* did everything but go to an extermination camp, but then he returned to Madrid to work in the Communist underground. "Arrested, he was sentenced to twenty-five years' imprisonment, of which he served just over eleven. Arrested a second time, he served a further seven years." Hundreds like him tell their stories in this book which, like recent events in Iran, powerfully demonstrates that repression, however brutal, will not succeed forever. □

THEATER

HAROLD CLURMAN

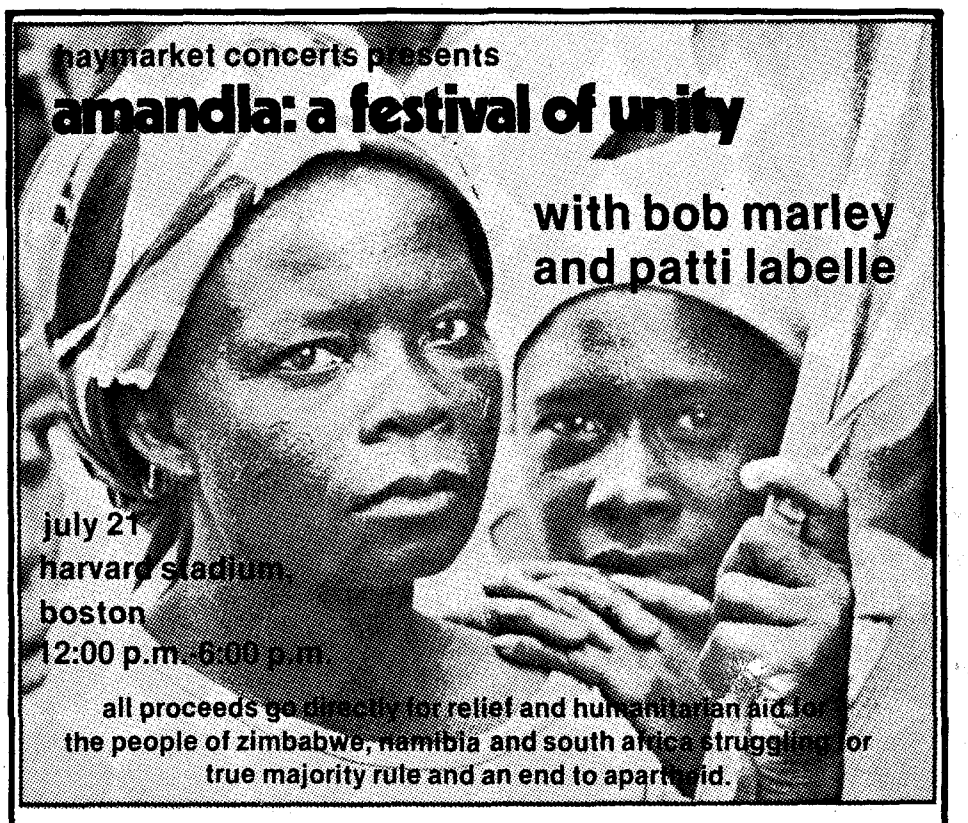
Before leaving for a three-week visit to Paris, London and Dublin, I attended three performances which merit attention.

The first was *Strider* (Chelsea Westside Theatre), a Russian semipantomime play based on a Tolstoy story and directed here by Robert Kalfin. It is about a horse, sound and true, celebrated as long as he can win races for his princely master and later made miserable when he no longer serves that purpose. The nobility is treated with contempt as a useless excrescence of humanity.

Though the story, even in its stage adaptation, retains some of the pathos, humor and heart of the original, I wish it had been presented by the kind of Russian company which must have staged it on its native ground. Such a play requires actors of special resources in voice, body and pantomimic skill as well as Slavic tone and temper, not to mention the privilege of prolonged rehearsal time. The music and scenery should savor of the local environment, the feel of the period. Without these elements the piece cannot properly function as theater.

Gerald Hiken, a most sympathetic actor, plays "Strider" (the horse) with devotion, but what is required by the occasion is a well-equipped ensemble. Off Broadway groups do not possess the means to fulfill the task; and it would not be undertaken on Broadway even if the means were available. Yet, I repeat, Tolstoy's fable, even now, remains engaging.

Michael Weller, as his first play, *Moonchildren*, attested, is a writer of talent. He is especially good in character delineation—particularly in the case of eccentrics. He depicts them with quizzical affection as well as lightness of wit. This is the most notable quality in his latest offering, *Loose Ends* (Circle-in-the-Square). The first act is very successful in presenting a gallery of young men and women who lie outside the bounds of convention without being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sufficiently bold or adept to manage their freedom. There is Doug, a fine fellow of hippie disposition who attempts to establish himself in Vermont as a builder of frame houses. Maraya, his mate, is a candid, sexually eager and too readily (or carelessly) pregnant woman. But their retreat from the mainstream is troubled by the taciturn nature of the Vermonters among whom they settle.

Doug would like the companionship of his idealistic friend Paul, recently attached to the Peace Corps and in love with Susan, a strappingly attractive girl he met on a beach in Bali who has ambitions as a photographer. And there are other characters of unusual stripe—including a couple who indulge in vaguely Hindu religious antics. Paul's complacently swaggering businessman brother is a specimen of the vulgar majority. The only wholly sensible person is a woman of Oriental origin who adjusts to her position as an editor of a Boston magazine and to her surroundings with forthright sobriety.

The second act is almost redundant. Paul leaves Susan because, after she first entices him into entering her business world, she refuses to jeopardize her increasingly promising career and independence by bearing the child he so passionately yearns for. At the end, the couple is still in intimate contact, but both of them are more or less committed to other mates—they are still separately unhappy. These scenes lack the piquancy of the earlier ones, the characters—especially the central ones—having become too "true to life," not to say commonplace.

Alan Schneider has chosen an excellent group of actors and has directed them all well. Kevin Kline and Roxanne Hart make a credible and good-looking pair. Celia Weston, as the least "brainy" of the women, is most winning. Jay O. Sanders is great fun as the settler in Vermont, and Jodi Long, as the Boston editor, earns our approval for the directness of her responses.

I Remember Mama, a musical with a score by Richard Rodgers, lyrics by Martin Charnin and Raymond Jessel and book by Thomas Meehan, based on John Van Druten's play of the same name, is a placid show which would hardly be noteworthy were it not for the presence of Liv Ullman. Her warm womanliness and simple truthfulness in the character of Mama represent her best work on the New York stage to date. I could not help thinking as I watched her that she is one of the very few real *women* among present-day actresses. There are hardly more than three or four now on the distaff side of the stature of Ethel Barrymore, Laurette Taylor and Pauline Lord whom—quite apart from sheer acting talent—I could designate "true women." Something seems to have happened. □

Israel Shenker

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ART

LAWRENCE ALLOWAY

One of the reasons an artist has for living in New York City is other artists. There is no group better informed about contemporary art in the world, and its members are in continual consultation. Two exhibitions recently have taken the network of personal contacts as an organizing principle: one deals with cross-generational contacts, "Exchanges I," the other with peer contacts, "Artists and Friends."

The "Exchanges I" show at the Henry Street Settlement was the result of a reaction against what Renata Karlin calls "the homogeneous look" of museum exhibitions of young artists. Her impatience with this sameness peaked last year during "The Exxon Young Talent Exhibition" at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. She was the consultant from the Exxon Corporation for the show and felt increasingly oppressed by the narrowness of the expertise that the curator brought to her selection. Now, as Visual Arts Director of the Henry Street Settlement, she has conceived a form of exhibition to oppose curatorial myopia by the informal but more venturesome contacts among artists themselves.

The method of selection was this. She invited four known artists to invite four new artists and these artists to invite four more. Work by all the artists involved in the exhibition was shown. (The illustrated catalogue with a text by Lucy R. Lippard is available from the Settlement at 265 Henry Street, New

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ork, N.Y. 10002 for $1, including ostage.) The strength of the method is iown by the chain that begins with owardena Pindell, who showed two rge rich works in which a crust of torn id sewn paper is as important as crylic and watercolor in defining a surice of delicate frenzy. She invited Ana lendieta, who makes apparitional feale images in landscape sites, body silouettes that sometimes seem no more an a gash. In turn, Mendieta chose an tist who also exhibits photographic cords of works done in landscape, hristine Oatman. In one piece Oatman mulated configurations of water by ones on the beach; in another she aped lace over rocks in a stream. The minist theme is evident in these three ery different artists and it gained in insity from our recognition of the utual choices.

Renata Karlin points out in the catague that the two-tier process, sugested by Sol LeWitt, found "truly nknown artists (only three of the eight nerging artists have been part of a revious group exhibition in the New ork area)." However, even unknown tists can take their cues from the allery and museum circuit and this is hat happened. The show as a whole is ot at the level of the Pindell-Mendieta-)atman sequence. The fault may lie in arlin's initial selection of the known rtists, which was fairly timid: Nancy raves, LeWitt, Pindell, and Joan nyder.

LeWitt was a good idea: he is well nown for his good will toward younger rtists, but on this occasion he selected a ompulsive draftsman, Charles Gaines, ongenially close, too close, to his own iodular interests. Gaines invited Loren). Calaway, who works in the miniaturt mode: in his case it is school equipient for the little people, diminutive nalogues of desks, tables and blackoards. The work is neat and trendy. Nancy Graves invited Robert E. Feero, who does rather heavy cubist-derived bstractions, and he in turn invited 'eter Ambrose, who makes taut and legant abstractions of, to quote the arist, "an absolute object-character." They are nicely done, but entirely within he style precedents that Karlin had ioped to get away from. "Exchanges I," planned for the early summer next 'ear, will begin with this year's secondier artists, Ambrose, Lois Baron whose "Seven Patterned Ties" is a suble painterly extension of her cutouts),

Norman Birnbaum, Blair Clark,
Ramsey Clark, Fred Cook, Terrence Des Pres,
E.L. Doctorow, Richard Falk, Jules Feiffer,
Tom Ferguson & Joel Rogers, Frances FitzGerald,
James Goodman & Dorothy Samuels, Philip Green,
Christopher Hitchens, Leonard Kriegel,
Penny Lernoux, Sanford Levinson,
Carey McWilliams, Aryeh Neier, Marcel Ophuls,
Nora Sayre, Robert Sherrill, Calvin Trillin,
Kurt Vonnegut, Alan Wolfe **write it.**

John Alcorn, Marshall Arisman, Tony Auth,
Seymour Chwast, Robert Grossman, Frances Jetter,
Ed Koren, David Levine, Lou Myers, Ed Sorel
illustrate it.

Victor Navasky **edits it.**

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Calaway and Oatman choosing peers who in their turn will select known artists. This is a promising continuation of a methodologically sound start.

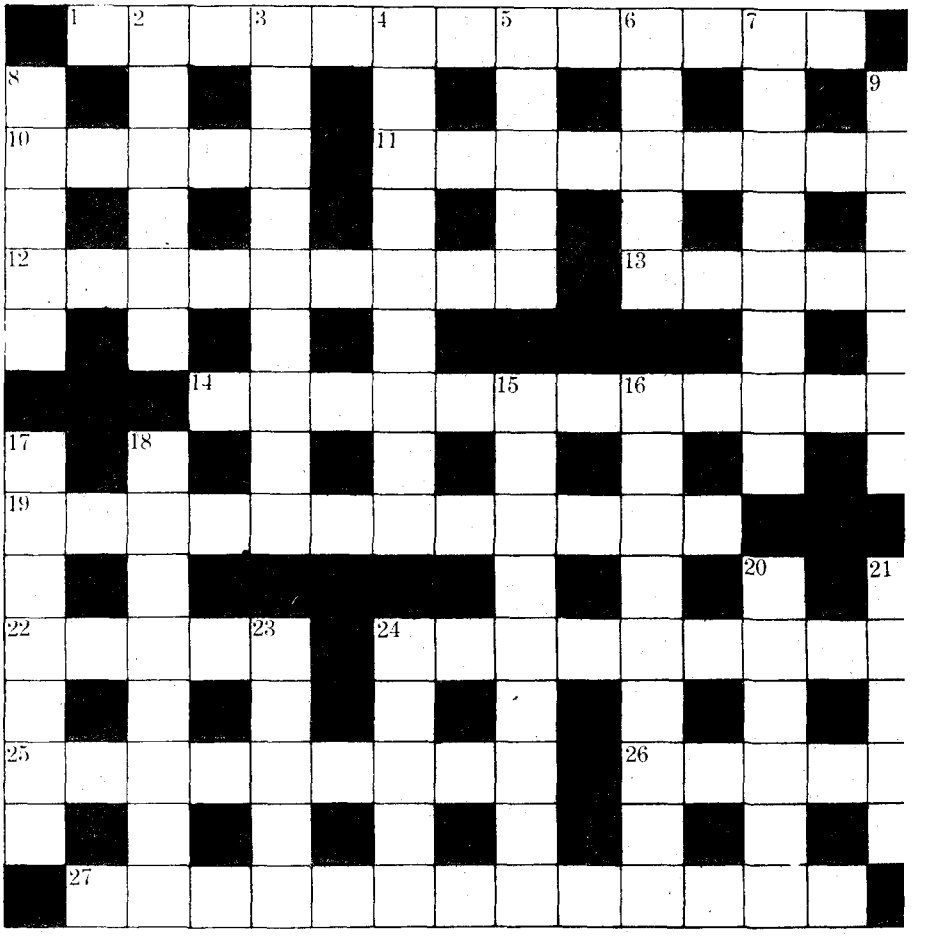
The First Street Gallery, now ten years old, is one of the first of the Soho cooperatives, owned and run by artists. Like the Bowery Gallery, which opened at the same time, it is committed to realism. The recent exhibition of "Artists and Friends" admirably surveyed the gallery style, based largely on the exercise of fresh observation within the traditional genres. Each of the gallery members invited, to quote the gallery, "a friend whose work is meaningful to him" or her. Thus the show revealed a section of the patterns of aesthetic taste and friendship which characterize the art world but are rarely discussed. Roughly a third of the artists shown were women, a proportion arrived at by these figures: twelve men selected male artists, only two selected women; five women selected men, two of them husbands, and only two invited other women. A realist co-op is not necessarily a feminist co-op.

Host and guest artists are not always visually homogeneous: Fred Badalamenti showed a pale, almost monochrome, flower painting, whereas his guest, Paul Gianfagna, was represented by a drawing of a quattrocento head. Usually, however, the pairs are in orbit around a mutual visual problem, a situation that illuminates each work. Marcia Clark and her guest, Rackstraw Downes, are both interested in the pictorial contraction of long urban vistas into small areas of paint. Peter Carella and his guest, Curtis Bailey, both deal with streets in perspective, viewed obliquely from second-story windows. Maurice Flecker and his guest, Lois Pedersen, seem in their figure studies to have worked from the same model, a reminder of the importance of sketch clubs as nodal points for artists. Lisa Zwerling's image of a shadowy romantic nude facing the spectator contrasts with the painting by her guest, William Wilkins, of a corner of a studio with a backview of a model heaped in it.

Such contrasts and connections mean more when they are initiated by artists than by curators. Curators tend to derive their opinions from the existing support system, particularly as it reflects dealers' tastes. Artists' choices, however, have the potential and sometimes the fact of an independent view. □

Crossword Puzzle No. 1782

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 Says a person's joint shows skill in the handling of public affairs. (13)
10 Judge your this by what you swear on. (5)
11 See 8 down
12 Does one so count Mae untrue—very untrue? (9)
13 Has the sense of wealth. (5)
14 One of them has the potential of copper. (They might help to take care of force expansion.) (6,6)
19 Waste water here, and it's gone forever. (4,3,5)
22 Tender of French metal. (5)
24 Listens in the actual environment, but it's only practice. (9)
25 Old story-teller of what one says to a goose—a couple of centuries on either side—possibly ten. (9)
26 How walls are sometimes described, one contended. (5)
27 The head man—at least on paper. (6-2-5)

DOWN

2 If you're fiddling around, do this first—or is that what one gets if something sounds missing? (4,2)
3 Appeared well-dressed, as it happened. (6,3)
4 An odd number is a thing that goes deep! (9)
5 Having something in common, such as Mr. Smith and Mr. Eisenhower? (5)
6 Traditionally wicked when in bad moods. (5)
7 It's a mite shaken, and copies could be m from it. (8)
8 and 11 across A number detailed to be ot than seers? (5,5,4)
9 Press it when in trouble, and continue to so. (7)
15 The sort of brother an ordinary morta bound to be. (9)
16 Like those in Orwell's Farm? (9)
17 Gathers in a condensed layer, and not spheres coming together. (7)
18 Twain for example looked forward to be somewhat deceptive. (3-5)
20 What the ambitious might do with a poin religion. (6)
21 The type in the playground is not project (5)
23 Astor-prepared food? (5)
24 One hopes one doesn't fall in one's lap. (

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1781

ACROSS: 1 Mixed metaphors; 9 Niaga 10 Unmoved; 11 Animal; 12 Starte 14 Greener; 17 Gaped; 19 Interi 21 Class pin; 23 and 25 Follow throu 26 Convict; 27 Second-guessers. DOWN and 15 across Man-eating shark; 2 X-rayi 3 Dead ahead; 4 Edam; 5 Adultera 6 Homer; 7 Riviera; 8 Odes; 13 Unf ished; 15 Surrounds; 16 Kilowa 18 Prairie; 20 Malaise; 21 Cite; 22 Scu 24 Ecru.

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